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Commission on Sustainable Development
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Fourth session
New York, 31 January-11 February 2000
Item 2 of the provisional agenda
Adoption of the agenda and other organizational matters

Provisional agenda

1. Election of officers.
2. Adoption of the agenda and other organizational matters.
3. Promoting and facilitating the implementation of the proposals for action of the Intergovernmental Panel on Forests, and reviewing, monitoring and reporting on progress in the management, conservation and sustainable development of all types of forests:
   (a) Promoting and facilitating implementation (programme element I.a);
   (b) Monitoring progress in implementation (programme element I.b).
4. Matters left pending and other issues arising from the programme elements of the Intergovernmental Panel on Forests process:
   (a) Need for financial resources (programme element II.a);
   (b) Trade and environment (programme element II.b);
   (c) Transfer of environmentally sound technologies to support sustainable forest management (programme element II.c);
   (d) Issues that need further clarification:
      (i) Underlying causes of deforestation and forest degradation (programme element II.d (i));
      (ii) Traditional forest-related knowledge (programme element II.d (ii));
      (iii) Forest conservation and protected areas (programme element II.d (iii));
      (iv) Forest research (programme element II.d (iv));
      (v) Valuation of forest goods and services (programme element II.d (v));

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(vi) Economic instruments, tax policies and land tenure (programme element II.d (vi));

(vii) Future supply of and demand for wood and non-wood forest products (programme element II.d (vii));

(viii) Assessment, monitoring and rehabilitation of forest cover in environmentally critical areas (programme element II.d (viii));

(e) Forest-related work of international and regional organizations and under existing instruments (programme element II.e).

5. International arrangements and mechanisms to promote the management, conservation and sustainable development of all types of forests (programme element III).

6. Other matters.

7. Adoption of the report of the Forum on its fourth session.

Annotations

1. Election of officers

Rule 23 of the rules of procedure of the functional commissions of the Economic and Social Council stipulates that, unless the commission decides otherwise, its subsidiary organs shall elect their own officers. Rule 24 of the rules of procedure states that the rules of procedure of the commission shall apply to the proceedings of its subsidiary organs insofar as they are practicable. In this regard, in accordance with rule 15 of the rules of procedure, the Forum shall elect, at the commencement of the first meeting of a regular session, from among the representatives of its members, such officers as may be required.

2. Adoption of the agenda and other organizational matters

In accordance with rule 7 of the rules of procedure of the functional commissions of the Economic and Social Council, the Forum shall, at the beginning of each session, after the election of its officers, adopt the agenda for that session on the basis of the provisional agenda.

3. Promoting and facilitating the implementation of the proposals for action of the Intergovernmental Panel on Forests, and reviewing, monitoring and reporting on progress in the management, conservation and sustainable development of all types of forests

At its first session, the Forum stressed the need for a focused and balanced approach to its work in relation to its mandate, as contained in the Programme for the Further Implementation of Agenda 21 (General Assembly resolution S-19/2, annex) and reconfirmed by the Economic and Social Council in its resolution 1997/65. The Forum emphasized that there was a need to build on the positive results achieved by the Intergovernmental Panel on Forests, and that the focus should be on implementation of the proposals for action and on issues on which international consensus had yet to be achieved. In the light of these considerations, the Forum decided that the work of its forthcoming sessions would be conducted under three interlinked categories (divided into 15 programme elements — 2 under category I, 12 under category II and 1 under category III) , which should receive balanced intergovernmental attention. Under programme elements I.a and I.b, the Forum will consider section III of its report on its third session and section I.A of its report on its

second session, which contain conclusions, important elements for the implementation of the IFF proposals for action and proposals for action for these programme elements.

Documentation

Report of the Intergovernmental Forum on Forests on its third session (E/CN.17/IFF/1999/25)

Note by the Secretariat transmitting section I.A extracted from the report of the Intergovernmental Forum on Forests on its second session (E/CN.17/IFF/2000/5)

4. Matters left pending and other issues arising from the programme elements of the Intergovernmental Panel on Forests process

Under programme elements II.a, II.b, II.c, II.d (i)-(viii) and II.e, the Forum will consider sections IV.A-D of its report on its third session and section II.F of its report on its second session, which contain conclusions and proposals for action for these programme elements. In addition, it will consider the report of the Secretary-General on programme element II.e, which was before the Forum at its third session but was not discussed.

Documentation

Report of the Secretary-General on programme element II.e (E/CN.17/IFF/1999/15)

Report of the Intergovernmental Forum on Forests on its third session (E/CN.17/IFF/1999/25)

Note by the Secretariat transmitting section II.F extracted from the report of the Intergovernmental Forum on Forests on its second session (E/CN.17/IFF/2000/6)

5. International arrangements and mechanisms to promote the management, conservation and sustainable development of all types of forests

Under programme element III, the Forum will consider section V of its report on its third session, which contains a compilation of proposals presented by the Co-Chairmen, as well as the other documentation listed below.

Documentation

Report of the Secretary General (E/CN.17/IFF/2000/4)

Report of the Intergovernmental Forum on Forests on its third session (E/CN.17/IFF/1999/25)

Note by the Secretariat on priority forest policy issues (E/CN.17/IFF/2000/2)

Note by the Secretariat on elements and functions for a future international arrangement and mechanism (E/CN.17/IFF/2000/3)

7. Adoption of the report of the Forum on its fourth session

The report of the Forum on its fourth session will be submitted to the Commission on Sustainable Development at its eighth session, in 2000.

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Commission on Sustainable Development
Intergovernmental Forum on Forests
Fourth session
New York, 31 January-11 February 2000
Item 5 of the provisional agenda*
International arrangements and mechanisms to promote the management, conservation and sustainable development of all types of forests (programme element III)

Priority forest policy issues

Note by the Secretariat

Summary

The present note provides background information on some of the forest issues of international concern as well as policy responses through the Intergovernmental Panel on Forests and the Intergovernmental Forum on Forests (IPF/IFF) process. It stresses the cross-sectoral nature of the forest policy issues as well as the scope of sustainable forest management as an integral part of overall sustainable development. Among the wide range of forest issues of concern, the note discusses deforestation; production and consumption; trade of forest goods and services; conservation and sustainable use of biological diversity; and the role of forests in climate change and other global environmental issues.

The note also summarizes the evolution of policy deliberations from the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development through IPF to IFF, and points out some of the main results of this process, including identifying priority issues; building consensus on the nature of the many complex issues; formulating approaches to address forest issues from the perspective of sustainable development; fostering North-South partnerships; and increasing participation and enhanced coordination among United Nations and other international organizations. Further progress is still to be achieved on some policy issues related to sustainable forest management, including capacity-building, financing, transfer

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Furthermore, the note identifies some of the prerequisites for feasible approaches to addressing critical issues in international collaboration, and the main challenges to reaching an agreement on future international arrangements and mechanisms on forests, emphasizing the urgency of moving from policy deliberations to action.

The note is to be seen as a companion document to the note by the Secretariat on elements and functions for a future international arrangement and mechanism (E/CN.17/IFF/2000/3), and is intended to provide background information on priority policy issues for the report of the Secretary-General (E/CN.17/IFF/2000/4). It is not intended for negotiation at the fourth session of the Forum.

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I. Introduction

1. The present note, a companion document to the note by the Secretariat #2 (E/CN.17/IFF/2000/3) on elements and functions, aims to provide background information to the report of the Secretary-General (E/CN.17/IFF/2000/4). It includes an overview of some areas of concern related to forests, in which during the Intergovernmental Panel on Forests (IPF)/Intergovernmental Forum on Forests (IFF) processes, significant progress has been achieved since the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED). It also describes some prerequisites for feasible approaches to address critical issues in international collaboration, and notes some of the challenges for achieving the management, conservation and sustainable development of all types of forests.

2. The present note is not intended for negotiation at the fourth session of the Forum.

II. Some forest concerns warranting further action at the international level

A. Current state of the world's forests

3. The latest global data on forest cover indicate that in 1995, there were 3.4 billion hectares (ha) of natural and planted forests worldwide and 1.7 billion ha of other wooded land.[1] Between 1990 and 1995, there was a loss of 65.1 million ha of forests in developing countries due to deforestation, while an increase of 8.8 million ha in forest area occurred in developed countries, resulting in a net decrease in forest area by 56.3 million ha. This trend of alarming rates of deforestation continues to attract the world's attention to the effects of deforestation on the earth's forests ecosystems as well as to the well-being, livelihood and subsistence of hundreds of millions of poor rural people in many developing countries. Major direct causes of the change in forest cover include conversion of forests to agricultural land, large developments of infrastructure in developing countries and the establishment of forests on abandoned agricultural land in developed countries. Indirect causes include undefined land tenure and lack of forest valuation.

B. Forests as a cross-sectoral policy issue

4. A significant shift in attitudes has taken place in recent years on approaches to address forest issues. Today, international attention is increasingly focused on all types of forests instead of only tropical forests, and forests are now valued not only for timber production but also as a reservoir of biological diversity, a provider of critical environmental and social services and an essential element of the livelihood of local people.

5. Forest issues are complex and cross-sectoral from political and policy perspectives. Sustainable forest management incorporates economic, ecological, social and cultural dimensions, and is thus closely linked with various other sectors and their development. An illustration of the cross-sectoral nature of forest policy and the linkages between forest and other sectors is evident in Agenda 21.[2] In addition to chapter 11 on combating deforestation, Agenda 21 also refers to forests or forest management directly in 16 other chapters. They cover issues from demographics (chap. 5) and human settlements (chap. 7) through issues dealing with conservation and management of resources for development, including atmosphere (chap. 9), land resources (chap. 10), desertification (chap. 12), mountains (chap. 13), agriculture and rural development (chap. 14), biological diversity (chap. 15), biotechnology (chap. 16), oceans and coastal areas (chap. 17) and freshwater (chap.18), to various aspects related to decision-making, such as major groups (chaps. 23-32), integration (chap. 8) and information (chap. 40). This makes new demands on the forest and related sectors to play a significant role in overall sustainable development, covering all natural resources and land uses, as well as industries and trade. The main challenge in many countries, both developing and developed, is to have a forest sector that is strongly oriented to sustainable development and that is able to participate and contribute effectively to the coordination and harmonization of policies between various sectors, interfacing with forest policy.

C. Some major cross-sectoral concerns on forests

6. The wide range of concerns and priorities related to forests in the world are determined by the economic, social and political conditions, as well as the endowment of forest cover in countries. The many areas of concern that will need further attention at the international level include the following:

- The vital role of forests in economic development, employment and income generation as well as subsistence at the subnational and national levels, especially in rural areas for forest dwellers, including local and/or indigenous communities and women;
- Long-term supply of timber and other forest products and services in the context of increasing population and expanding economies;
- Conservation and sustainable use of biological diversity, realizing equitable benefits, and the need to establish protected forest areas;
- Protection of soil and watersheds, particularly in fragile ecosystems and vulnerable landscapes (drylands, coastal areas and mountains). Adequate forest cover is often a prerequisite for a safe and reliable water supply, as well as for enhancement of sustainable agriculture and food security;
- Climatic stability, including mitigation of human induced global warming;
- Other social and cultural services, such as recreation and protection of cultural, aesthetic and spiritual heritage, including sacred forests.

7. Many of these concerns, reflected in the Non-legally Binding Authoritative Statement of Principles for a Global Consensus on the Management, Conservation and Sustainable Development of All Types of Forests (Forest Principles)[3] and Agenda 21, especially chapter 11 on combating deforestation, have been deliberated within the IPF/IFF process. Some of these major concerns are introduced below.

1. Deforestation, population growth and poverty

8. Deforestation and forest degradation are widely recognized as one of the most complex and critical forest and environmental problems facing human society, with serious long-term economic, social and ecological consequences. Over the last two decades, deforestation has reached an alarming rate, mostly in developing countries as a result of changes in land-use from forest to agriculture. The annual rate of deforestation in developing countries for the period 1990-1995 was estimated to be 13.7 million ha.[1] Forest fires, caused naturally or deliberately by man for clearing land, have also resulted in serious forest degradation and loss in recent years. The climatic fluctuations associated with the El Niño phenomenon or such natural catastrophes as volcanic eruptions and the increase in the concentration of greenhouse gases in the atmosphere have further contributed to deforestation and forest degradation.

9. Population growth and poverty have long been considered among the fundamental underlying causes of deforestation. Research by the Centre for International Forestry Research (CIFOR), however, has shown that population growth rates and deforestation under high land productivity conditions are not in a simple relationship. Although the latest estimates by the United Nations Population Division show the world population reaching 8.9 billion persons in 2050 (with most of the growth in the least developed regions), the impact on forests is unlikely to be proportionate. However, in the least developed countries, population growth and poverty do force people to rely more directly on natural resources for subsistence and to occupy forest land for their agricultural and livestock activities and for fuelwood supplies.

10. Other factors contributing to the alarming rates of deforestation include inadequate capacity to meet the basic needs of health and education, forcing Governments to assign lower priority to forest and environment issues; inefficient agriculture, including subsidies for certain agricultural markets and export-oriented incentives, resulting in unsustainable land uses; lack of sound policy and institutional frameworks as well as of technical and human capacity; unclear land ownership and tenure arrangements; difficulties in providing incentives (e.g., compensation for farmers who keep their land forested and thus provide non-market environmental benefits to society) as well as alternatives (e.g., eco-tourism) that would generate income. In some cases, the above factors are associated with the resistance to change by powerful groups within society, rather than a lack of technical capacity. Added to these governance problems is corruption in forest industry and administration, an intractable and difficult problem in many parts of the world.

Role of women in sustainable forest management

11. It is rural women that are most hurt by deforestation, yet they are also crucial to the solution. In many countries, especially developing countries, women play a major role in forest management by using their traditional knowledge for the benefit of the household and the community, as well as for the protection of forest ecosystems. In addition to collecting fuelwood, women plant trees, manage nurseries, protect and maintain forests around their villages and put products from nearby forests to multiple uses. Women commonly collect nuts, fruits, forage, medicines and oils from trees for use at home and for sale in local markets. They also teach this knowledge to their children, both boys and girls, and thereby pass this traditional knowledge to the next generation. Nonetheless, women still confront obstacles

that limit their ability to participate in community development programmes and prevent them from achieving a more powerful decision-making role regarding land tenure and management of forests. Both in developing and developed countries, forest activities with higher returns are still predominantly controlled by men. Better integration of women into forest management activities will require attention to fundamental sociocultural patterns of behaviour and expectations of both men and women. This is likely to accompany more general recognition of the significant potential of local people to contribute to strengthen forest management.

2. Conservation and sustainable use of biological diversity

12. Forest ecosystems are a major reservoir of biological diversity, holding the vast majority (between 50 per cent and 70 per cent according to different estimates) of the world's terrestrial species. Various processes, including those concerned with criteria and indicators for sustainable forest management, have recognized that the conservation of biological diversity constitutes an essential and integral element of sustainable forest management. However, the major concern remains that most natural forests, which host the greater level of forest biological diversity, are under threat and becoming increasingly deforested or degraded, and as a result their biological diversity is being dramatically reduced. In the context of the ecosystem approach, the conservation of forest ecosystems is increasingly seen as a prerequisite for benefiting from the goods and services that forests provide, including contributions to local economies and non-market benefits to society. Conservation of unique types of forests, including so-called old growth forests, has recently gained increasing political attention. Another challenge related to biological diversity is how to share responsibilities and achieve appropriately balanced mutual benefits between environment and forest sectors when setting operational goals for the conservation and sustainable use of biological diversity.

13. The Convention on Biological Diversity entered into force on 29 December 1993. Its main objectives include the conservation of biological diversity and the sustainable use of its components, as well as the fair and equitable sharing of the benefits arising from the utilization of genetic resources. The Conference of the Parties to the Convention, at its fourth meeting (Bratislava, May 1998), adopted a decision on forest biological diversity, including a work programme with the following elements: (a) holistic and inter-sectoral ecosystem approaches that integrate the conservation and sustainable use of biological diversity, (b) the ways in which human activities, in particular forest-management practices, influence biological diversity, (c) methodologies to advance the criteria and indicators for forest biological diversity, and (d) further research and technological priorities brought forward into the Convention from the IPF proposals for action. The work programme for forest biological diversity underlines, *inter alia*, the contribution of forest-related traditional knowledge to sustainable forest management. Forest biological diversity is now one of the five thematic areas of Convention activities, and thus forms a significant part of its agenda. Fruitful collaboration has taken place between the IPF/IFF and Convention processes, and through the participation of the Secretariat of the Convention in the Inter-Agency Task Force on Forests (ITFF).

3. Climate change

14. Forests play an important role in mitigating global climate change by storing carbon in biomass and soils, and by increasing their role as sinks when their area or productivity is increased. Conversely, forests also act as sources of greenhouse gases from forest fires, decay of biomass and disturbance of soils, resulting in emissions of carbon dioxide (CO_2). Thus, forests are correctly considered to be a net source of CO_2.

15. In addition to their role in mitigating climate change, forests are also a potential victim of global warming, with anticipated impacts on species composition, the existence of certain forest types or ecosystems, and such increased stresses as pests, pathogens and fires.

16. The United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change entered into force on 21 March 1994. The adoption of the Protocol to the Convention in December 1997 established procedures to promote the reduction of greenhouse gases. Its modalities, rules and guidelines on forest-related provisions, accounting methods for carbon levels and forest-related terminology need further clarification. From the point of view of sustainable forest management, compliance with the Kyoto Protocol is considered by some to be unbalanced since forests are regarded as mainly performing one function — carbon sequestration and serving as a carbon sink — and thus the ecological sustainability of forests as well as the potentially negative socio-economic impacts of managing and protecting forests exclusively as carbon sinks are largely ignored.

17. There are potential opportunities to provide funding for rehabilitating degraded forests and restoring biodiversity in developing countries, including those with low forest

cover, through, for example, agroforestry. The clean development mechanism within the Kyoto Protocol provides opportunities for industrialized countries to cut the costs of mitigation by launching offshore projects in developing countries. In return, the developing countries can get technology and investment for promoting sustainable management of forests, which also mitigates climate change. In theory, such projects can also include carbon sequestration activities, but to date the Parties do not have a consensus on inclusion of forestry projects.

4. Production and consumption of forest goods and services

Industrial wood

18. The role of forests in economic development is very significant, timber being one of the primary sources of income from forests in many countries. In many tropical countries, planted forests are also becoming an increasingly important part of national economies.

19. Demand for wood and forest products is largely driven by increases in population and general economic development. Higher per capita income is usually associated with increased consumption (currently occurring, for example, in many countries in Asia) and higher demand for recreation and environmental services (e.g., in Europe and North America).

20. Most studies agree that at the global level, wood supplies seem to be sufficient to meet industrial production requirements. Distribution, however, remains a problem, a situation similar to food and agricultural products, since many less developed countries lack financial resources to import wood and wood products. Major concerns related to the supply and demand for wood include unsustainable production and consumption levels in some parts of the world. The issue of insecurity of land tenure has also been identified as an important factor in such unsustainable management.

Wood as a source of energy

21. It is estimated that in 1995, nearly two thirds of the 3,350 million cubic metres of wood harvested were used as woodfuel. Although woodfuels account for only 7 per cent of the world's total energy supply, wood is one of the major sources of domestic energy in developing countries, particularly in rural areas.[1]

22. In many developing countries, due to their higher reliance on wood for energy, the increased collection of fuelwood will lead to further deforestation and forest degradation, although there is evidence of adaptation through greater use of alternate energy sources. On the other hand, in many developed countries, where woodfuels are less significant but may account for up to 17 per cent of all energy use, there is a need to promote the use of wood as a renewable source of energy to replace some fossil fuels, which would also significantly reduce CO_2 emissions. Thus, how wood is used for energy purposes leads to different impacts on forests and environment.

Non-wood forest products and services

23. Non-wood forest products (NWFPs) include a diverse array of goods, such as food products, game, building materials, medicines, fibres and goods of economic, cultural or spiritual significance. Although their large-scale commercial value is rarely significant, they are often socially and culturally as well as commercially important for people living in or close to forests. Some NWFPs lose social and economic relevance or importance as economies develop. The fundamental economic challenges for most NWFPs are related to their diversity, the small scale of their production, their limited significance in markets and their lack of development on an industrial scale.

24. Services provided by forests cover a wide range of ecological, economic, social and cultural implications, thereby further complicating the forest-related decision-making processes. In many cases, despite increasing interest and efforts undervaluation of wood and non-wood forest products and services, especially non-market benefits, impedes progress towards sustainable forest management.

5. Trade and sustainable forest management

25. The international trade in wood and non-wood forest products can affect sustainable forest management both positively and negatively. Difficulties in realizing positive impacts from trade are related to barriers on trade liberalization, access to market and internalization of environment-related costs. Trade liberalization, accompanied by sound environmental and social policies, could have positive impacts since sustainable forest management has the potential to promote economic development, contribute to poverty alleviation and reduce environmental degradation on a long-term basis. However, in the short term, the impacts of trade liberalization could be negative.

26. As a result of several negotiations under the auspices of the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT)/World Trade Organization (WTO) and other international and regional arrangements, tariffs on forest

products are declining. There is, however, a wide range of non-tariff barriers, including quantitative restrictions, health and technical standards, bans, domestic subsidies and most recently certification and eco-labelling, that deal with forest management. Certification initiatives are increasing, and they range from mandatory to voluntary and from national to international initiatives.

27. More practical experience is still needed to prove the effectiveness of certification to improve forest management, especially in countries where deforestation is greatest, i.e., in tropical developing countries. The role of Governments in certification is also emerging. Trade restrictions in isolation cannot be expected to effectively address deforestation since most of the global roundwood consumption and production is used domestically as fuelwood and local timber. Other important concerns include illegal logging and trade, obscure pricing and accounting practices, corruption and "traditional" processing and marketing problems that prevent profitability. In addition, policies and actions outside the forest sector have significantly greater effects on trade than those within its control.

6. Environmentally critical areas

28. Forests in arid zones and in some mountain and coastal areas as well as on small islands generally have lower economic value but high environmental and social importance, associated with their protective functions, as well as a source of a wide range of and non-wood forests products for local people. Forests in environmentally critical areas are especially susceptible to degradation and destruction resulting from both human activities and natural disturbances. In many countries with low forest cover and fragile forest ecosystems, rehabilitation and sustainable management of forests lack appropriate priority and focus in national political agendas.

29. The United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification in Those Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, particularly in Africa, entered into force on 26 December 1996. The Convention's global mechanism aims at mobilizing the transfer of financial and technological assistance and collecting and disseminating information. When fully operative, it could also offer an opportunity to raise financial assistance for forest-related projects.

7. Institutional and policy issues

30. Numerous demands on forests and the emergence of many different stakeholders have lead to a very complex forest policy context. In many countries, there is often a lack of efficient coordination and policy harmonization between the forest sector and other sectors, as well as a lack of institutional capacity to deal effectively and efficiently with all forest issues. A lack of a common institutional arrangement to address forest issues is a serious shortcoming. This has resulted in a fragmented approach to forest issues and a lack of cohesiveness, which has often created conflicts among special interest groups and between different administrative bodies. In both developed and developing countries, many forest-related issues, such as the conversion of forests to other land-uses, are dealt with outside the forest sector. At the international level also, various sectors interfacing with forests rarely meet to discuss interrelated and cross-sectoral issues.

31. Inadequate national implementation of sustainable forest management in many parts of the world is associated with a wide range of causes. One of the greatest concerns is the lack of sustained political commitment to what has already been agreed internationally. Political commitment requires considerable changes in attitudes. Inadequate policy coordination and harmonization between various levels (local, national, regional and global) and between all relevant sectors result in inconsistencies both inside and outside the forest sector as well as among various international instruments (e.g., the above-mentioned Conventions). There is also a lack of institutional capacity and administrative systems to support the implementation of national and international commitments. Often the challenges related to institutional and administration capacities are a matter of prioritizing the use of resources rather than a technical matter. Furthermore, in some cases, national and local decision-making on forests still fails to recognize the important existing and potential roles of relevant major groups, especially local and/or indigenous communities, user groups and women. The substantial involvement of all these actors is critical if sustainable forest management is to become a reality.

32. Another institutional problem is the lack of equitable access to financial and technical support by all developing countries. Better donor coordination and sustained long-term donor commitment would improve this situation.

33. While cooperation among the members of ITFF is widely recognized, there is inadequate coordination among many international organizations and instruments that request forest-related information, as well as a lack of clear focus at the national level to supply this information.

III. Evolving deliberations on forest policy

A. Policy responses: the three tracks

34. During the last decade, forest issues have been negotiated by Governments along three interrelated tracks.

35. The first, which may be called the "sustainable forest management track", has focused on the management, conservation and sustainable development of all types of forests in a holistic, cohesive and comprehensive manner. This includes UNCED, which formulated the Forest Principles and Agenda 21, especially chapter 11, as well as the IPF/IFF process (see paras. 39-47 below). Management, conservation and sustainable development of all types of forests is the primary focus of negotiation on this track.

36. The second track, which may be called the "international trade track", has focused on setting the rules for international trade of commodities and services that also include forest products and services. Efforts have centred on the reduction of tariffs and promotion of free trade, as a part of the general trend towards the removal of all trade barriers. At the same time, however, there have been increasing demands that forest products and services originate from sustainably managed forests, as reflected, for example, in "Objective 2000" of the International Tropical Timber Organization (ITTO). The trade track has also included, for example, international bans of certain tropical timber products under the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) and the imposition of the so-called non-tariff trade barriers through environmental requirements for forest products.

37. The third track may be called the "global environmental issues track". This includes global environmental issues, such as biological diversity, climate change, combating desertification and international trade in endangered species, treated under the above-mentioned Conventions, as well as many other environmental, trade and other international agreements. Under this track, forest-related elements play only a supportive role to address other global environmental issues.

38. In the second and the third tracks, forests or their functions are subject to another trade or environmental issue or they are considered as solutions to environmental problems, such as desertification or global warming. Despite the different status of forests in these two tracks, all three tracks are nevertheless interlinked, and there is a need for stronger collaboration and coordination among these processes.

Three tracks of intergovernmental deliberations on forest policy

International trade track	Sustainable forest management track	Global environmental issues track
• WTO • International Tropical Timber Agreement (ITTA) • CITES • Others	• UNCED 1992 Chapter 11 and other chapters of Agenda 21 Forest Principles • IPF 1995-1997 • IFF 1997-present • ITTA	• Convention on Biological Diversity • United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change • Convention on Combating Desertification • CITES • Others
Primary focus of each track		
International trade	↔ Management, conservation and sustainable development of all types of forests	↔ A global environmental issue with forest-related element

B. From UNCED through IPF to IFF

39. At UNCED, forests were among the most controversial issues being negotiated. Several years of international attention focusing almost exclusively on deforestation in tropical forests had created a situation in which developing countries, in particular forest-rich tropical countries, felt that their sovereignty over their natural resources was being threatened. They also felt that insufficient attention had been given to historic deforestation in industrialized countries and to existing threats to temperate and boreal forests. The prevailing North-South polarization concerning forests, therefore, did not permit agreements beyond the Forest Principles, Chapter 11 of Agenda 21 ("Combating Deforestation"), and reference to forests in 16 other chapters.

40. In contrast, the post-UNCED period from 1992 to 1995 was a confidence-building period with emerging North-South dialogue and partnerships, enabling the Commission on Sustainable Development, at its third session, in April

1995, to establish IPF to continue intergovernmental forest policy deliberations. The mandate of IPF was for a two-year period (1995-1997) and its programme of work involved several complex and politically sensitive issues, categorized as:

I. Implementation of forest-related decisions of UNCED at the national and international levels, including an examination of sectoral and cross-sectoral linkages;

II. International cooperation in financial assistance and technology transfer;

III. Scientific research, forest assessment and the development of criteria and indicators for sustainable forest management;

IV. Trade and environment in relation to forest products and services;

V. International organizations and multilateral institutions and instruments, including appropriate legal mechanisms.

41. The two years of intensive deliberations by IPF, supported by numerous meetings of experts, resulted in over 100 negotiated proposals for action on a number of issues related to sustainable forest management, including national forest programmes, forest assessment, criteria and indicators, traditional forest-related knowledge and underlying causes of deforestation. This large number of proposals for action by IPF is not surprising when one considers the broad spectrum of ecological, economic, social and cultural conditions related to forests in both developing and developed countries. Matters requiring further consideration — either because consensus could not be reached or because further analysis was required — included issues related to finance, transfer of technology, trade, and institutions and legal instruments.

42. The outcome of the Panel was endorsed by the Commission at its fifth session, in April 1997, the General Assembly at its nineteenth special session, in June 1997, and by many other high-level political forums. However, in view of the remaining unresolved issues, the General Assembly recommended a continuation of the intergovernmental policy deliberations on forests. Subsequently, the Economic and Social Council, in July 1997, decided to establish the ad hoc, open-ended Intergovernmental Forum on Forests under the Commission, with a mandate consisting of the following three, interrelated, categories:

I. Promoting and facilitating the implementation of the proposals for action of IPF, and reviewing, monitoring and reporting on progress in the management, conservation and sustainable development of all types of forests;

II. Considering matters left pending and other issues arising from the programme elements of the IPF process;

III. International arrangements and mechanisms to promote the management, conservation and sustainable development of all types of forests.

43. IFF will report to the Commission at its eighth session, in April 2000. The outcome of the fourth session of IFF as well as the decision to be taken by the Commission will determine the future and the form of the international agenda on policy, cooperation and action on forests.

C. Highlights of the IFF/IPF process

44. The IPF/IFF process has been instrumental in identifying priority issues as well as creating a political consensus on national and international action on forests. In this dynamic process, the main driving force has been the political will to vitalize international cooperation on forests. The level of political consensus today is considerably higher than in 1992. Consensus has been reached in many areas, such as underlying causes of deforestation and forest degradation, criteria and indicators, national forest programmes, forest conservation and protected areas, and forest research, to mention just a few. Some issues, such as traditional forest-related knowledge, are still in the early or medium phase of policy development, although proposals for action have been made during the IPF/IFF process. Less progress has been achieved to date on trade and sustainable forest management, especially on transfer of technology and financial resources related to sustainable forest management.

45. Documentation produced under the IPF/IFF process, including outputs of the large number of meetings of experts sponsored by Governments and NGOs and assisted by multilateral organizations, has provided a rich analysis of issues related to sustainable forest management, clarified terms and concepts and provided guidance on how to address many complex issues. Although the concept of sustainable forest management has been clarified throughout the IPF/IFF process, such as through the criteria and indicators initiatives, a definition acceptable to all parties remains elusive.

46. In addition, the IPF/IFF process has produced a number of other results, including:

- Establishment of an open and inclusive intergovernmental forum to deliberate forest policy and action;

- Establishment of a holistic approach that deals with all types of forests from a sustainable development perspective, with balanced consideration of social, economic and environmental aspects;
- Fostering North-South partnerships as well as contributions by NGOs, such as in co-sponsored expert meetings in support of the IPF/IFF process;
- Increased participation and engagement by Governments, as well as non-governmental organizations, including indigenous people's organizations;
- Enhanced coordination on forest-related matters among United Nations and other international organizations, for example, through ITFF.

D. ITFF as the main institutional legacy of IPF/IFF

47. Following the establishment of IPF in April 1995, ITFF[4] was established, at Geneva in July 1995 to coordinate the inputs of international organizations to service the forest policy process. The Panel recognized the valuable contributions made by ITFF and commended it as an example of effective inter-agency collaboration. In fact, ITFF may be considered as the main institutional legacy of the IPF/IFF process. The scope of ITFF is now evolving beyond servicing IPF/IFF deliberations and the implementation of the IPF/IFF proposals for action to addressing some other critical issues, such as forest fires.

IV. Prerequisites for feasible approaches towards sustainable forest management

A. Five overarching principles

48. According to the Rio Declaration on Environment and Development,[5] the Forest Principles and as reaffirmed throughout the IPF/IFF process:

- States have the sovereign right to utilize their resources to meet their national policy objectives;
- States have the right to economic development in accordance with their social, economic, environmental and political conditions;
- States have common but differentiated responsibilities regarding collective global interest and concerns related to forests;
- States have the responsibility to ensure that activities within their jurisdiction or control do not cause damage to the environment of other States or areas beyond the limits of national jurisdiction;
- International cooperation should focus on building human and institutional capacity in developing countries to manage their forests sustainably.

B. Sustainable forest management as a microcosm of sustainable development

49. Sustainable forest management needs to be seen in the context of overall sound land use and long-term national commitment to sustainable development, including all its social, cultural, economic and environmental dimensions. Sustainable forest management will not be possible under general conditions of poverty and corruption. Protection of forests for global benefits needs to first address and meet the needs of local communities living in and around such forests, as well as to contribute to national policy objectives.

50. The forest sector, on the other hand, may serve as a test case for harmonizing institutional arrangements, trade agreements, recognition of the rights of indigenous people, decentralization of decision-making etc. Forests have the potential to emerge as a sector that sets an example to harmonize policies and reconcile divergent interests, but this will require sustained political commitment and stronger, high-level forest institutions to be able to exert influence beyond the forest sector.

C. National forest policies and institutional frameworks

51. A new international arrangement or mechanism on forests, cross-sectoral policy harmonization and new modalities for international cooperation must be based on sound national forest policies and programmes, technical and human capacity, and appropriate institutional frameworks. There is a need to incorporate sustainable forest management in the national development agenda, as well as to allocate the necessary human and financial resources to the forest sector. Above all, there is a need for sustained and strong political commitment to sustainable forest management.

52. Many or most developing countries and countries with economies in transition, however, remain without adequate institutional and financial capacity to make the necessary changes at the national level. The global transition to sustainable forest management must therefore include an element of sustained and enhanced international cooperation and assistance to these countries for an appropriate period of time.

D. Partnerships

53. The forging of international partnerships related to forest issues is one of the highlights of the IPF/IFF process. These include Co-Chairing of both IPF and IFF by representatives of developing and developed countries; the co-sponsorship of government lead initiatives by many developing and developed countries as well as by major groups; and the coordination of forest-related activities among members of ITFF.

54. At the regional and subregional levels, countries are strengthening their cooperation on forests as, for example, in the Southern African Development Community (SADC), among countries of the Amazon Cooperation Treaty, in Central America, among Association of South-East Asian Nations (ASEAN) countries, and in the Pan-European Process. Regional and eco-regional processes on criteria and indicators for sustainable forest management continue to expand with joining of new countries and subregions. New or strengthened partnerships and networks are needed on forest research and information.

55. Country-driven national forest programmes, formulated through a participatory process, are widely recognized in the IPF/IFF process as the basis for sustained political commitment, setting national priorities and facilitating international cooperation on forests.

56. Furthermore, a multiplicity of other formal and informal networks and partnerships have emerged or have been strengthened during the IPF/IFF process, including among the private sector, the international forest research community and non-governmental organizations representing environment, development, forest industry, forest owners, indigenous people and other major groups. Some networks and initiatives, such as the World Commission on Forests and Sustainable Development, and the International Forest Advisers Group have supported and contributed to the IPF/IFF process in many areas. The CEO's ad hoc forum on forests, chaired by the President of the World Bank, brings together some of the leaders of the private sector and NGOs to foster constructive dialogue to examine policy issues related to forests and to build consensus on action.

57. As emphasized by all three keynote speakers at the third session of IFF, the Under-Secretary-General for Economic and Social Affairs, the Vice-President of the World Bank and the Deputy Director-General of FAO, the need to forge and strengthen partnerships is the key prerequisite for making progress on sustainable forest management. One of the major challenges ahead is to negotiate a future international arrangement and mechanism that consolidates the progress made to date; capitalizes on the new partnerships; has the necessary attributes to effectively facilitate the implementation of IPF and IFF proposals for action; and facilitates a general global transition towards sustainable forest management.

V. Main challenges ahead

A. Consolidating the progress on forests made since 1995

58. As described above, the IPF/IFF process has produced significant consensus and outputs on many complex and politically sensitive issues. The future international arrangement and mechanism needs to continue these intergovernmental forest policy deliberations by incorporating the results of UNCED, the IPF/IFF process and many voluntary international and regional initiatives. Furthermore, there is also a need to seek strong and sustained political commitment, coordinate forest-related components of existing legal instruments and mobilize resources to implement agreed actions. Any future arrangement and mechanism need also to include periodic political deliberations at the ministerial level and a mechanism involving high-level officials of Governments and international organizations and instruments. The fourth session of IFF is a timely opportunity to build on the successful IPF/IFF process, to agree on a future international arrangement and mechanism and to continue and strengthen, in an open, participatory and transparent manner, forest policy deliberations, coordination and implementation.

B. Moving from policy deliberations to focused action: urgency to act

59. There is an urgency to take decisive action now. For each year of accepting business as usual, further deforestation and increasing demands on forest goods and

services will take humanity further away from the goal of sustainable forest management. It will also postpone remedial action in situations of scarcity, ecological degradation and human suffering. At the global level, in terms of biological diversity and human-induced climate change, business as usual can often only be characterized as short-sighted.

60. Irrespective of the form taken by a future international arrangement and mechanism on forests, there is an urgent need to implement the already agreed proposals for action, as well as to assess and report on progress made at the local, national, regional and global levels. This will include support to national forest programmes; strengthening national capacity for forest assessment and valuation, as well as promoting participatory approaches to decision-making and implementation; clarifying land tenure rights, including rights of local and/or indigenous communities; generating a favourable environment for private investments; removing existing barriers to international trade in forest products and services from sustainably managed forests; and strengthening international cooperation and inter-agency collaboration.

C. Need to report progress and measure performance

61. In order to sustain political support, progress made towards sustainable forest management needs to be assessed and reported periodically. This means assessing progress made by all relevant parties — Governments, international and regional organizations, NGOs and the private sector — as well as existing forest-related instruments.

62. The collection, monitoring, organization, assessment, reporting and dissemination of data will involve substantial costs and institutional capacity. Therefore, duplication could be minimized by utilizing, where appropriate, existing reporting systems of international organizations and instruments, and by harmonizing concepts, definitions and terminology as well as existing monitoring and reporting systems. Criteria and indicators could play a major role in the reporting of progress towards sustainable forest management at the national, regional and global levels. To enable periodic and comprehensive reporting, there is a need to build and strengthen capacities at the national level.

D. Mobilizing subnational, national, regional and global resources

63. The proposals for international support to sustainable forest management seem to evoke images of enormous sums of money, possibly accumulated in a fund governed by a heavy bureaucracy, creation of new unwanted international organizations or provision of excessive resources and influence to existing institutions. This, however, does not have to be the case. There is no doubt that the new international arrangement, the elements of its programme of work, as well as its principal functions will need to be carefully formulated and negotiated, including a mechanism for facilitating the financing of sustainable forest management. The following six approaches indicate that this may not be quite as impossible a task as it might first appear:

(a) *Mobilize national resources.* Not only has it always been clear throughout the UNCED process that national resources would constitute the major source of funding for sustainable forest management but there is also an increasing awareness in many countries, including developing countries, that the transition to sustainable forest management is in the national interest and therefore needs to be largely financed from national sources;

(b) *Build partnerships.* There is a move away from institutional "empire-building" towards a greater understanding of the value, efficiency and "business sense" of partnerships, not only among intergovernmental organizations but also among other multilateral, bilateral, non-governmental and private sector partners in development;

(c) *Mobilize support from the private sector.* The private sector is a major player in transfers of technology, capacity-building and economic development. There may be potential for private sector investments in countries other than only those richly endowed with forests;

(d) *Strengthen international cooperation.* Sustained long-term donor commitment and better donor coordination are needed to ensure equitable access to financial and technical support by all developing countries that implement IPF proposals for action and prepare national forest programmes as defined by IPF;

(e) *Spend smarter.* Present levels of official development assistance would go a long way towards financing the transitional phase of sustainable forest management if spent in the countries that have strong political commitment and appropriate governance, through

appropriate channels, in a timely fashion and according to locally defined needs and priorities;

(f) *Sustainable forest management requires additional resources mostly for the transition phase.* The word sustainable implies, among other things, economic sustainability. The ultimate consequence of this notion is that although sustainable forest management will require increased initial investments in forests, these will be mostly transitional in nature.

VI. Conclusions

64. The future of the intergovernmental forest policy deliberations and cooperation is now at the crossroads. There are a number of areas of priority concern that need to be addressed urgently through whatever future international arrangements and mechanisms are decided by the Forum and the Commission on Sustainable Development. Many critical areas of concern require further attention and immediate action. Future solutions require strengthened capacity-building and partnerships as well as mobilizing and spending resources smartly, but above all they require strengthened and long-term political commitment.

65. The intergovernmental policy dialogue and deliberations have been going on for almost a decade, beginning with the UNCED preparatory process. IFF has continued deliberations on all issues left pending by IPF, leading to common understanding and progress on many complex and politically sensitive issues on the international forest agenda. It is unlikely, therefore, that after the fourth session of IFF, in February 2000, further intergovernmental policy deliberations alone, without means of implementation, will adequately address the critical issues at the national, regional and global levels.

66. What will be needed, however, is to move forward from policy dialogue and deliberations to strengthened commitment and action. In the year 2000, the timing for this transition is ideal: the fourth session of IFF is the opportunity for Governments to agree upon a feasible, action-oriented decision that will facilitate the implementation of agreed forest policy issues at the national, regional and global levels.

67. Elements and functions of future international arrangements and mechanisms for the management, conservation and sustainable development of all types of forests are discussed in the companion note by the Secretariat (E/CN.17/IFF/2000/3). Options for future arrangements and mechanisms are analysed in the report of the Secretary-General (E/CN.17/IFF/2000/4), for further deliberation at the fourth session of IFF.

Notes

[1] See Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, *State of the World's Forests, 1999* (Rome, 1999).

[2] *Report of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, Rio de Janeiro, 3-14 June 1992*, vol. I, *Resolutions Adopted by the Conference* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.93.I.8), resolution 1, annex II.

[3] Ibid., annex III.

[4] ITFF members include the following: Center for International Forestry Research (CIFOR); Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO); International Tropical Timber Organization (ITTO); secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity; Department of Economic and Social Affairs of the United Nations Secretariat; United Nations Development Programme (UNDP); United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP); and World Bank.

[5] *Report of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development* ..., annex III.

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International arrangements and mechanisms to promote the management, conservation and sustainable development of all types of forests (programme element III)

Elements and functions for a future international arrangement and mechanism

Note by the Secretariat

Summary

The present note identifies and elaborates on possible elements to be addressed and functions to be performed by a future international arrangement and mechanism on forests, based on the Co-Chairs' compilation text as contained in the report of the third session of the Intergovernmental Forum on Forests (see E/CN.17/IFF/1999/25).

The possible elements identified in the present note broadly reflect the emerging consensus in the areas of priority concern, as identified at the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development and by the Intergovernmental Panel on Forests/ Intergovernmental Forum on Forests processes. It is proposed that the set of possible elements would remain the same regardless of the form of a future international arrangement and mechanism.

The note suggests that an international arrangement and mechanism on forests should perform four principal functions: policy development, coordination, policy implementation and the provision of legislative authority. The note further suggests that although all the principal functions would be present in a future arrangement and mechanism on forests,

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one would be the entry point and perform a dominant role. The relative importance of the principal functions in an international arrangement and mechanism on forests could change depending on its type or form, with shifting circumstances and needs, as well as over time.

The present note is intended to be read in conjunction with the note by the Secretariat or primary forest policy issues (E/CN.17/IFF/2000/2), and supports the analysis of options for an international arrangement and mechanism on forests contained in the report of the Secretary-General (E/CN.17/IFF/2000/4). It is not intended for negotiations but to facilitate discussion of programme element III at the fourth session of the Forum.

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I. Introduction

1. The present note has been prepared to facilitate the deliberations on programme element III of the Intergovernmental Forum on Forests (IFF) on elements and functions for an international arrangement and mechanism to promote the management, conservation and sustainable development of all types of forests. It should be read in conjunction with the note by the Secretariat on priority forest policy issues (E/CN.17/IFF/2000/2) and the report of the Secretary-General (E/CN.17/IFF/2000/4). Programme element III is scheduled for substantive discussion at the fourth session of IFF, when the Forum will adopt its report for consideration by the Commission on Sustainable Development at its eighth session.

2. During the past five years, the Intergovernmental Panel on Forests (IPF) and IFF processes have produced a significant consensus on many complex and politically sensitive issues. The issue of an international arrangement and mechanism has been one of the most sensitive. However, based on the suggestions for elements, functions and options for an international arrangement and mechanism, as they appear in the report of IFF at its third session (E/CN.17/IFF/1999/25), the broad characteristics of a future international arrangement and mechanism appear to be emerging.

II. Outcome of the third session of the Forum

3. The results of deliberations on programme element III at the third session of IFF are summarized below.

A. Concerns and problems

4. There are many complex and interrelated factors that directly or indirectly affect forests, sustainable forest management and forest policy. The Non-legally Binding Authoritative Statement of Principles for a Global Consensus on the Management, Conservation and Sustainable Development of All Types of Forests[1] (Forest Principles), chapter 11 of Agenda 21,[2] the IPF proposals for action and the IFF process, as well as many other initiatives, have all recognized the need to address forest-related issues in an integrated manner at the national, regional and global levels. Developments in other sectors can greatly affect forests, thus there is also a need for cross-sectoral policy harmonization and action.

5. IFF recognized that global attention to forests has been precipitated, among others, by such concerns as deforestation, forest degradation, competition with alternative land use, and the lack of proper valuation of wood and non-wood products and services derived from forests.

6. The future challenge for countries lies in creating the institutional, policy and operational environments that can enable forests to sustainably meet economic, social, cultural and environmental demands for numerous products and services. This would require, among others things, the development of national forest programmes, the transfer of technologies and financial resources, and access to international markets for forest products.

B. Broad principles

7. The Rio Declaration on Environment and Development and the Forest Principles provide the overarching guidance to the intergovernmental deliberation on sustainable development in general and forests in particular. These include the fundamental recognition of the sovereign rights to utilize national resources; the right to economic development; the responsibility to ensure that activities of one country do not cause damage to other countries; the common but differentiated responsibilities concerning collective interests and concerns; and that international cooperation should focus on building human and institutional capacities.

8. IFF noted that an international arrangement and mechanism on forests should take into account progress and consensus already reached, and should promote international action that facilitates implementation of sustainable forest management at the national, global and regional levels. An international arrangement and mechanism on forests should also consider forest-related aspects embodied in other instruments, mechanisms and programmes that address issues of national, regional and global significance relevant to forests. It should address all aspects and types of forests and the interests and needs of all countries, consider the special situation and needs of developing countries to implement sustainable forest management, and be inclusive of the areas of priority concerns to both countries with rich and with low forest cover. Furthermore, it should seek strong political commitment and sustained international cooperation.

C. Objectives

9. IFF suggested that the overarching objectives of an international arrangement and mechanism, which would promote the management, conservation and sustainable development of all types of forests, embrace some of the common aspects of the criteria that characterize sustainable forest management developed in the regional processes.

D. Elements considered

10. The formulation of a set of possible elements, i.e., forest issues of priority concern, to be addressed by a future international arrangement and mechanism on forests, has undergone several analyses and considerations during the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED) and IPF and IFF deliberations.

11. Discussion at the third session of IFF resulted in a compilation text presented by the Co-Chairmen, which reflected the comments made during the session by delegations. This compilation text, which included a set of elements, is contained in the report of IFF at its third session. The set of possible elements are discussed in section III of the present report and are further elaborated in annex I.

E. Functions proposed

12. Based on discussions at the third session of IFF, the Co-Chairmen suggested a set of functions for international arrangements and mechanisms beyond the year 2000. IFF commented on and proposed additional functions, but these were not further negotiated. The compiled list, as it appears in the report of IFF on its third session, indicates a range of functions with different scope, which could be performed by a future international arrangement and mechanism on forests. Section IV of the present report includes a synthesis and elaboration of 16 functions suggested at the third session of IFF.

F. Options for an international arrangement and mechanism

13. During the deliberations concerning guidance to the Secretariat for the preparation of documents for the fourth session, it was proposed that the following set of nine options for an international arrangement and mechanism on forests, or a combination of them, could serve as a basis for further analysis:

- A mechanism for improved coordination of existing arrangements;
- Ongoing ad hoc intergovernmental dialogue;
- A new permanent forum for intergovernmental dialogue;
- Improvement of non-legally binding instruments;
- A lead body role for an existing organization;
- Use of existing legally binding instruments;
- Regional mechanisms;
- A framework convention allowing for regional mechanisms;
- A new global legal instrument.

14. IFF requested that the Secretariat, in its analysis of options, focus on their ability to effectively fulfil the functions and address the elements.

III. Possible elements

15. A review of the Forest Principles, chapter 11 of Agenda 21, and the programme of work of IPF and IFF shows a remarkable consistency of elements — i.e., areas of priority concern — deliberated by countries during the past decade. The set of 16 possible elements listed below, which is elaborated in annex I, is based on those in the compilation text contained in the report of IFF on its third session. These elements are also set out in annex II together with a reference to paragraphs in the Forest Principles and Agenda 21 and the IPF/ IFF programme of work. Thus, this set of elements has taken into account consensus reached so far at UNCED and IPF as well as deliberations by IFF.

16. The following set of elements includes priority concerns for both developing and developed countries, and both countries with rich forest cover and countries with low forest cover. They also reflect national, regional and global concerns that could be facilitated by action at the international level:

Set of elements identified at the third session of IFF

1. Formulation and implementation of national forest programmes.
2. Promoting public participation.
3. Combating deforestation and forest degradation.

4. Traditional forest-related knowledge.

5. Forest-related scientific knowledge.

6. Forest health and productivity.

7. Criteria and indicators of sustainable forest management.

8. Economic, social and cultural aspects of forests.

9. Forest conservation and protection of unique types of forests and fragile ecosystems.

10. Monitoring, assessment and reporting, and concepts, terminology and definitions.

11. Rehabilitation and conservation strategies for countries with low forest cover.

12. Rehabilitation and restoration of degraded lands, and the promotion of natural regeneration and planted forests.

13. Maintaining forest cover to meet present and future needs.

14. Financial resources.

15. International trade and sustainable forest management.

16. International cooperation in capacity-building and access to and transfer of environmentally sound technologies to support sustainable forest management.

17. During the IPF and IFF processes, general consensus was reached on the scope of most of the elements listed above. While studying the descriptions contained in annex I, it would be advisable to consult the Forest Principles, Agenda 21 and the IPF proposals for action, as well as the evolving consensus as reflected in the report of IFF on its third session, to understand the broader context of each particular element. It is worth noting that the set of elements elaborated in annex I can be seen as sufficiently general to cover the elements discussed in the regional and subregional meetings of the Costa Rica/Canada initiative.

18. Any future arrangement and mechanism on forests will need to have a programme of work that is holistic, comprehensive and inclusive of the areas of priority concern to forests, as defined by UNCED, the Forest Principles and IPF and IFF. Accordingly, it is suggested that the set of elements presented above and elaborated on in annex I, be considered as the basis for the programme of work of a future international arrangement and mechanism, regardless of its form, without restricting such a future international arrangement and mechanism from including or excluding a particular element or assigning it a different level of priority than others in its programme of work.

IV. Functions of future international arrangements and mechanisms

A. Principal functions

19. The discussions at the third session of IFF resulted in a number of suggestions for possible functions or activities to be performed by a future international arrangement and mechanism to achieve its overarching objectives. The wide range of functions identified at the third session of IFF can be grouped under the following four types of principal functions.

- Policy development;
- Coordination;
- Policy implementation;
- Provision of legislative authority.

20. The nine options for an international arrangement and mechanism identified at the third session (see para. 13 above) could perform, in varying degrees, the four principal functions listed above.

21. Although a future international arrangement and mechanism would include all the above functions, only one of them would be the entry point and thus assume a dominant role. For example, an international coordination mechanism might also include, apart from coordination, policy development through the governing bodies of organizations and instruments involved. It might also provide legislative authority in the form of decisions of governing bodies and memoranda of understanding among the organizations and instruments. Such an option could also include policy implementation activities at the national level, such as through an agreed action programme. However, the main principal function in this example is coordination, and the other principal functions play subsidiary roles.

22. It should also be noted that an international arrangement and mechanism could change over time, either in a planned or in an evolutionary fashion. The relative importance of the principal functions may shift depending on changing needs and circumstances. For example, referring again to the previous example, what might start out as a coordination mechanism, with most of its functions related to coordination, could develop into an action programme with policy implementation as its dominant

function. The international arrangement and mechanism for chemical safety is an example of such an evolution: it started as a coordination mechanism, adding over time an implementation programme and a forum for policy deliberation in the Intergovernmental Forum on Chemical Safety. It has also recently resulted in negotiations towards two legally binding instruments on prior informed consent procedures and persistent organic pollutants.

23. There is no guarantee that the performance of one of the principal functions would automatically lead to fulfilling the others. All principal functions would have to be performed to varying degrees. An international arrangement and mechanism that has clearly spelled out the practical manner in which *all* four principal functions will be accomplished would have the best likelihood of overall success.

B. Supporting functions

24. The 16 functions identified at the third session of the IFF perform supporting roles to the four principal functions. A review and synthesis of the principal and the supporting functions are set out below. The descriptions are provided to illustrate how these functions could work in practice to fulfil the overarching objectives of an international arrangement and mechanism. They also include examples of arrangements and mechanisms in which the principal function in question seems to play a dominant role.

1. Supporting functions related to policy development

25. Functions related to policy development would in practice entail policy deliberations, consensus-building and activities related to reporting on progress in achieving sustainable forest management. The purpose would be to develop policies that are well founded in national level experiences, priorities and concerns. Current priority issues and emerging issues that are significant for sustainable forest management would be deliberated, and appropriate adjustments of policies would be made. In practice, it would also entail making use of information from several different sources to provide a coordinated review of progress in implementation, as an important feedback mechanism to policy development. For assessments, it could also be practical to use criteria and indicators for sustainable forest management, developed and implemented at the national, regional and global levels.

26. The principal function of policy development may include supporting such functions as:

- Elaborating objectives for the global forest policy framework;
- Identifying priority areas for action and addressing emerging issues;
- Exchanging information and experiences and discussing common concerns;
- Programming further global and regional actions;
- Developing of criteria and indicators for sustainable forest management.

27. Examples of arrangements with policy development as their dominant function are the General Assembly, the Commission on Sustainable Development, the Committee on Forestry of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), the Intergovernmental Forum on Forests and conferences of parties to legally binding instruments.

2. Supporting functions related to coordination

28. An arrangement and mechanism with coordination as its dominant function would in practice have to involve a very active participation of different organizations and instruments, at different geographical levels. Effective coordination requires agreement and common understanding among organizations and instruments to undertake collaborative action on a common programme. The performance of functions dealing with a common understanding of key concepts, terms and definitions, and global principles of sustainable forest management, could be achieved through working groups on scientific and technical coordination. These could report back to the governing bodies of the organizations and instruments involved, which could consider these issues from their respective policy and strategic perspectives.

29. The principal function of coordination may include several supporting functions, such as:

- Contributing to synergies and identifying and securing coordination and collaboration;
- Enhancing international and regional cooperation;
- Promoting a common understanding of key concepts, terms and definitions;
- Agreeing on global principles of sustainable forest management.

30. Examples of mechanisms with coordination and collaboration among international organizations as their

dominant function are the Inter-Agency Committee on Sustainable Development and the Inter-Agency Task Force on Forests.

3. Supporting functions related to policy implementation

31. The existing mechanisms concerned with policy implementation usually involve an action programme with associated support in the form of financing and transfer of technologies. Expectations to influence the form of support given to countries and to the type of activities would imply close linkages and interaction with a policy development mechanism.

32. Improvement of effectiveness, efficiency and coordination of forest-related bilateral and multilateral assistance in forests is currently usually performed through informal mechanisms. National-level collaboration among international organizations as well as among bilateral donors in implementing projects and programmes have been elusive in the past. However, the Inter-Agency Task Force on Forests and the International Forestry Advisors Group experiences show promise for the future.

33. In practice, the policy implementation function is performed through specific programmes of field-based activities backed up by committed sources of funding, identified early in a process.

34. Policy implementation may include such supporting functions as:

- Supporting forest policy reform processes;
- Supporting the efforts and responding to the needs of developing countries;
- Improving the effectiveness, efficiency and coordination of bilateral and multilateral assistance;
- Assessing, reviewing and reporting on progress.

35. Examples of international arrangements and mechanisms with policy implementation as their dominant function are the International Programme on Chemical Safety, the Global Environmental Facility, technical assistance programmes in many organizations, notably FAO, the United Nations Development Programme, the International Tropical Timber Organization, the World Bank and regional development banks.

4. Supporting functions related to the provision of legislative authority

36. The main objective of a legally binding instrument is to provide legislative authority and sustained political commitment through protocols, articles and/or rules to guide the development of legislation at the national level that complies with the instrument. For arrangements and mechanisms, other than a legally binding instrument, legislative authority can be provided by other means. In many cases, commitment is secured through contracts, project documents and memoranda of understanding among interested parties, such as organizations, Governments and private persons. Decisions, resolutions, declarations, recommendations and proposals for action by different United Nations bodies are all examples of means by which legislative authority could be provided.

37. The principal function of provision of legislative authority includes supporting such functions as:

- Strengthening the level of commitment to implementation;
- Securing political commitment;
- Providing effective governance.

38. Examples of arrangements and mechanisms that provide legislative authority include the conventions resulting from UNCED, with their associated protocols; decisions by the General Assembly; the declaration on forests of the Group of Eight Major Industrial Countries; the Rome declarations on forestry made at the second FAO ministerial meeting on sustainability issues in forestry, on the theme "National and international challenges", held in Rome on 8 and 9 March 1999, and resolutions passed by European ministers responsible for forests.

V. Other major considerations for a future arrangement and mechanism on forests

A. Participation

39. There are implications regarding participation by Governments in some of the options identified at the third session of IFF. For example, a coordinating mechanism among international instruments and multilateral organizations would not directly involve Governments. A legally binding instrument would include only the signatory parties. In all of the options, it would be desirable to make

provisions for the participation of major groups, such as the private sector and non-governmental organizations.

B. Technical and scientific advice

40. It is essential to ensure that the functions of policy development, coordination, policy implementation and the provision of legal authority are based on sound scientific and technical knowledge of forests. A preparatory task force or working group, made up of independent experts dealing with scientific and technical issues, could seek consensus on the scientific and technical state of the art on a given issue. They could then present feasible courses of action to an international arrangement and mechanism to support its policy and strategic decisions. The advice of independent experts can lend substantial credibility to an arrangement and mechanism, and provide a sound scientific and technical basis for decisions on policy action.

C. Relationships with existing forest-related bodies

41. There are many forest-related issues that are already treated in existing organizations and instruments. There are also some issues that have not yet reached a level of consensus or common understanding to be usefully treated at the same level as others within an international arrangement and mechanism on forests.

42. For a future international arrangement and mechanism to contribute to synergies among forest-related organizations and instruments, with their own independent mandates, it would have to be high-level, flexible and innovative enough to treat its issues of priority concerns in a manner that informs and contributes to the deliberation and implementation of the policies of other forest-related organizations and instruments, and vice versa. Furthermore, some areas of priority concern have not reached the same level of consensus as others, and deliberations on those issues would probably be more explorative in nature. Thus, while a future international arrangement and mechanism on forests needs to deal with all forest and forest-related issues in a cohesive, comprehensive and inclusive manner, it would not necessarily treat all issues in similar ways.

VI. Concluding observations

43. The Forest Principles and the Rio Declaration on Environment and Development serve as guiding principles for addressing concerns presently facing forests. The Forest Principles, chapter 11 of Agenda 21, the IPF proposals for action and the IFF process have all recognized the need to address forest-related issues in an integrated, coherent and holistic manner at the national, regional and global levels. A future international arrangement and mechanism on forests should build upon the consensus and progress made at UNCED and in the IPF/IFF processes.

44. The overarching objectives of an arrangement and mechanism for future international cooperation on forests could embrace the common aspects of the criteria for sustainable forest management developed in regional processes, with the addition of a few more international aspects, in order to promote the management, conservation and sustainable development of all types of forests.

45. Collectively, all the elements included in the Forest Principles, chapter 11 of Agenda 21 and the IPF/IFF programmes of work constitute priority issues of global concern. A future international arrangement and mechanism on forests needs to engage the political community at a high level in order to address these elements in an integrated, coherent and holistic manner. It also needs to be flexible enough to allow for emerging issues of priority concern to be integrated into its programme of work.

46. An international arrangement and mechanism needs to be action oriented and perform the four principal functions of policy development, coordination, policy implementation and provision of legislative authority. The functions need to be formulated in a clear and practical manner so that the way in which they will support national, regional and international action is explicit.

47. The main characteristics of an international arrangement and mechanism will be determined by where the relative emphasis is placed among its four principal functions. At the same time, its effectiveness will depend on the existence of supporting functions associated with *all* the principal functions since the performance of one particular principal function will not guarantee the fulfilment of another. The international arrangement and mechanism on forests should also allow for an evolution over time in order to be able to assume modified or additional functions in response to changing needs or circumstances, either for its entire programme of work or for selected areas of its work.

48. A future arrangement and mechanism on forests would benefit from the participation, advice, views and inputs of independent scientific and technical experts, non-governmental organizations and other major groups.

49. There is a need to consider forest-related issues embodied in other instruments, mechanisms and organizations and to explore opportunities to forge synergies. An international arrangement and mechanism on forests would promote an integrated and holistic approach to forests by informing, benefiting and collaborating with existing forest-related instruments and institutions.

Notes

[1] *Report of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, Rio de Janeiro, 3-14 June 1992*, vol. I, *Resolutions Adopted by the Conference* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.92.I.8), resolution 1, annex III.

[2] Ibid., annex II.

[3] Ibid., annex I.

Annex I

Elaboration of possible elements

The set of 16 elements set out below have been identified and synthesized from the report of the Forum on its third session (E/CN.17/IFF/1999/25), and are also based on the Forest Principles, Agenda 21 and the IPF/IFF programme of work.

1. Formulation and implementation of national forest programmes

National forest programmes, as defined by IPF, are viable frameworks for addressing forest sector issues, including implementation of the IPF proposals for action in a holistic, comprehensive and cross-sectoral manner. Countries are encouraged, in accordance with their national sovereignty, the specific social, economic and environmental conditions in the country and national legislation, to develop, implement, monitor and evaluate national forest programmes that include appropriate approaches towards sustainable forest management. National forest programmes provide the basis for action at the national level as well as for international cooperation.

2. Promoting public participation

Public participation in decision-making on forests at various levels has been encouraged in the IPF proposals for action as well as during the IFF process, particularly for the development, implementation and planning of national forest programmes. Public participation is also very crucial for creating political awareness and commitment.

3. Combating deforestation and forest degradation

There is worldwide concern for deforestation, which continues at an alarming rate, as well as the continued degradation of forests. The negative consequences of deforestation and forest degradation include the loss of environmental, economic, social and cultural benefits from forests. The underlying causes of deforestation and forest degradation are recognized as complex and frequently associated with human activities outside the forest sector. International cooperation is essential to reverse current trends and to undertake corrective action at the national level.

4. Traditional forest-related knowledge

Indigenous people and local communities in many parts of the world depend on local forests for their subsistence and economic and social well-being. These forest-dependent people have centuries of experience and traditional knowledge on the utilization of the forests around them. IPF recognized the potential contribution of such knowledge to meet the objectives of sustainable forest management. This rich source of knowledge, considered valuable in terms of numerous wood and non-wood products as well as management approaches, is associated with concerns of protection, benefit-sharing and intellectual property rights.

5. Forest-related scientific research

The management, conservation and sustainable development of all types of forests, if it is to meet a wide range of demands, must be based on a sound understanding of the structure and function of forest ecosystems and the impact of human activities on forests. The strengthening of human and institutional capacity to develop and apply science and technology, through research and development, is a crucial component of the international priority agenda for action on forests. Other priority areas for scientific research under consideration by IFF include an international priority-setting mechanism for research, support to regional and eco-regional networks of institutions engaged in forest research, and increased funding to enhance the effectiveness of existing research capacity.

6. Forest health and productivity

Sustainable forest management recognizes that forests simultaneously provide a wide range of socio-economic, environmental and cultural benefits, values and services at the local, national, regional and global levels. Forests are no longer viewed primarily as a source of industrial or fuel wood but as complex ecosystems that need to be maintained in a healthy state in order to provide the full range of benefits for present and future generations. A shift from a sustained yield of wood to sustainable forestry requires a corresponding shift from forest management to forest ecosystem management. Forest health can also have significant impact on access to markets and international trade in forest products.

7. Criteria and indicators of sustainable forest management

Criteria and indicators provide a conceptual framework for policy formulation and evaluation, and should be considered as useful tools for assessing trends in forest conditions, for reporting on the state of forests and for achieving sustainable forest management. Criteria characterize the broad objectives of sustainable forest management, while indicators provide a basis for assessing actual forest conditions. When combined with specific national goals, criteria and indicators also provide a basis for assessing progress towards sustainable forest management. Criteria and indicators can therefore play an important role in defining the goals of national forest programmes and policies and evaluating the effectiveness with which they are implemented.

8. Economic, social, ecological and cultural aspects of forests

The objectives of sustainable forest management should be to meet the economic, social, environmental and cultural needs of present and future generations. Economic and social development and environmental protection involving forests and forest lands should be comprehensive and integrated into national forest programmes. These activities need to also take into account the needs and culture of communities that live in and around forests.

9. Forest conservation and protection, unique types of forests and fragile ecosystems

Protected areas today serve a much broader array of social and ecological functions than they did in the past, and as such their role is likely to remain important, particularly in the conservation of forest biological diversity and related goods and services. Moreover, protected areas of representative and unique forests can provide valuable baselines to assess the impact of human interventions on forest ecosystems. National, regional and global networks of protected forest areas have been recognized as an integral part of the management, conservation and sustainable development of all types of forests. All regional processes engaged in developing criteria and indicators for sustainable forest management include the protection of representative and unique forests as a criterion. A national strategy to establish a network of protected forest areas needs to be addressed in national forest policies and programmes.

10. Monitoring, assessment and reporting, and concepts, terminology and definitions

There is a need to encourage access to and generate timely and reliable information for the formulation, implementation and assessment of forest policy. National forest inventories are an important basis for effective formulation of national forest programmes, and assessment of the actual and potential conditions of all types of forests is central to sustainable forest management. Periodic reporting on the state of forests and exchange of information and experiences on progress in achieving sustainable forest management is an extremely important activity for promoting sustainable forest management. Streamlining existing reporting requirements and coordination among organizations and international instruments that request information on forests could considerably ease some of the reporting burdens on national institutions. Ensuring coordination and comparability of concepts, terminology and definitions would greatly enhance the synergy between various instruments that contain forest-related elements, and would also enhance the effective use of limited resources for activities involving forest assessment and monitoring.

11. Rehabilitation and conservation strategies for countries with low forest cover

Forests in developing countries with low forest cover provide subsistence to the local population and are deeply integrated into the fabric of rural society. However, informal, subsistence-type economies, which are common in environmentally degraded areas with low forest cover, are not generally reflected adequately in national economic and development statistics. Only an analysis of the importance of increasingly scarce forest and other wooded lands for poor rural people will allow the assessment of the true value of these ecosystems and provide the basis for compelling arguments for increasing investment in regions with low forest cover.

12. Rehabilitation and restoration of degraded lands, and the promotion of natural regeneration and planted forests

It has been recognized that planted forests can play an important role in rehabilitating degraded lands and in alleviating some of the pressures on natural forests for supplying forest products and services. Forests in environmentally critical areas are especially susceptible to degradation and destruction resulting from human activities and natural disturbances. There is a need to take action and organize international cooperation to restore the productive

capacity and biological diversity of degraded lands, as well as to expand forest cover to meet diverse needs now and in the future. This is particularly critical in order to meet the subsistence needs of rural populations and alleviate poverty in developing countries with low forest cover. IFF expanded the scope of its initial focus on forest cover in environmentally critical areas to also include sub-humid, arid and semi-arid areas in tropical and temperate regions, mountain ecosystems, wetlands and coastal systems, in particular mangroves and small islands, as well as trees outside forests.

13. Maintaining forest cover to meet present and future needs

This element has not been adequately discussed during the IPF and IFF processes. It underlies some of the basic understanding of sustainable forest management and emphasizes the need to reserve a certain proportion of forest cover to maintain the potential to provide goods and services for a country as a whole. The policy decision by a country to set aside a certain percentage of its total land area under forest cover will depend on social, economic, environmental and political priorities and considerations.

14. Financial resources

The financing of forest-related activities involves complex arrangements. In countries with commercially attractive forests and/or a forest industry, well-targeted capacity-building may be enough to achieve progress towards sustainable forest management. Other countries, unable to attract private financing, such as countries with low forest cover, will need financial assistance that goes beyond mere building of capacity, such as for rehabilitation, afforestation and reforestation. Discussions in IPF and IFF have focused on the possibilities for better coordination among multilateral and bilateral donors, as well as within the recipient country, for a more effective utilization of resources. The mobilization of national resources, raising new and additional funds and the identification of an appropriate mix of financing mechanisms to support sustainable forest management have received substantial attention in IPF/IFF. Discussions on financial resources in IPF and IFF have also included such issues as effective private sector involvement; integration with national policies and priorities and effective coordination; the application of economic instruments and tax policies; the mobilization of national financial resources; and the possibility of finding a mechanism to raise funds to establish a forest fund dedicated to support activities aimed at sustainable forest management.

15. International trade and sustainable forest management

IPF and IFF deliberations have emphasized the mutually supportive roles of international trade and sustainable forest management. Trade measures intended to promote sustainable forest management should not constitute a means of arbitrary or unjustifiable discrimination or a disguised barrier and restriction on international trade. Voluntary certification of forest management and labelling of forest products are among the potential tools in promoting sustainable forest management and differentiating forest products and services in the market. Forest products and services and their substitutes need to be adequately valued through full-cost internalization. The nature and extent of illegal trade in wood and non-wood forest products is a serious concern due to damage to ecosystems, loss of biodiversity, lost revenue by Governments, forest owners and local and/or indigenous communities, and distortion of markets for forest products and services. There is a need to develop strategies for sustainable forest management with a long-term perspective so that the negative effects of short-term gains and market changes can be minimized.

16. International cooperation in capacity-building and access to and transfer of environmentally sound technologies to support sustainable forest management

International cooperation for capacity-building is considered to be a critical mechanism to assist developing countries in the implementation of sustainable forest management, and includes such activities as education and training and institutional capacity, including management training. Key constraints include inadequate availability of financial resources, compensation and retention of trained staff, and lack of access to technologies and equipment. IPF and IFF deliberations on technology transfer have focused on the economic, social and environmental appropriateness of transferred technologies, and how to enhance North-South and South-South cooperation. Improved access to and the use and dissemination of technologies can greatly enhance progress towards sustainable forest management through more efficient resource use in harvesting, forest product manufacturing and the use of wood for energy.

Annex II

Relationship between elements, IPF and IFF programmes of work, the Forest Principles and chapter 11 of Agenda 21

Forest principles	*Chapter 11 of Agenda 21*	*IPF work programme*	*IFF work programme*	*Elements for consideration*
2 (a), 2 (b), 3 (a), 5 (a), 6 (b), 8 (d), 8 (f), 8 (g), 8 (h), 9 (c)	1, 2 (b), 4 (a), 10, 11, 12 (b), 13, 14 (a), 14 (b), 31 (a), 1, 7 (a), 12 (b), 12 (e), 18, 19, 21, 22, 29, 30, 31, 33	I.1	I (a)	1. Formulation and implementation of national forest programmes
2 (d), 5 (b), 12 (b), 12 (d)	3, 4 (a), 8, 9, 10, 11, 12 (b), 14 (a), 14 (b), 27, 28, 38, 31 (a), 39	I.1	I (a) I (b)	2. Promoting public participation
Preamble (c), 2 (b), 3(c), 8 (b), 7 (a), 8 (h), 9 (a), 9 (c), 13 (d), 13 (e)	1, 10, 13 (j), 21 (a)	I.2	II.d (1)	3. Combating deforestation and forest degradation
5 (a), 12 (d)	3(g), 4(a), 13(b), 13 (i), 14 (d)	I.3	II.d (2)	4. Traditional forest-related knowledge
12 (a), 12 (c)	3 (a), 4 (c), 5, 7, 8, 13 (a), 14 (d), 26, 33 (b), 36	III.1 (b)	II.d (4)	5. Forest-related scientific knowledge
2 (b), 6 (c), 6 (e), 8 (b), 8 (e), 15	13 (a), 22 (e), 22 (l)	III.1 (c)	II.d (5)	6. Forest health and productivity
8 (d)	3 (d), 22 (b), 22 (d), 23, 26, 29, 31 (b), 33 (a)	III.2	I (b)	7. Criteria and indicators of sustainable forest management
2 (b), 6 (c), 8 (c), 9 (b)	11, 21, 31 (a)	I.1	II.d (6)	8. Economic, social and cultural aspects of forests
2 (b), 4, 6 (a), 6 (d), 8 (a), 8(b), 8(e), 9(c), 15	3 (e), 3 (g), 8 (b), 10, 12 13 (a), 13 (d), 13 (e), 13 (f), 14, 15 (b), 15 (d), 21, 22 (c), 22 (d)	I.5	II.d (3)	9. Forest conservation and protection of unique types of forests and fragile ecosystems
2 (c), 8 (d), 12 (a), 12 (c)	2, 3, 4 (a), 4 (b), 13, 14, 17, 20, 21, 31	III.1 (a)	I (b)	10. Monitoring, assessment and reporting, and concepts, terminology and definitions
2 (b), 4, 6 (a), 6 (d), 8 (a), 8 (b), 8 (e), 9 (c), 15	3 (e), 3 (g), 8 (b), 10, 12, 13 (a), 13 (d), 13 (e), 13 (f), 14, 15 (b), 15 (d), 21, 22 (c), 22 (d)	I.5	II.d (8) et al.	11. Rehabilitation and conservation strategies for countries with low forest cover
2 (b), 4, 6 (a), 6 (d), 8 (a), 8 (b), 8 (e), 9 (c), 15	3 (e), 3 (g), 8 (b), 10, 12, 13 (a), 13 (d), 13 (e), 13 (f), 14, 15 (b), 15 (d), 21, 22 (c), 22 (d)	I.4	II.d (8) et al.	12. Rehabilitation and restoration of degraded lands, and the promotion of natural regeneration and planted forests
2 (c), 8 (d), 12 (a), 12 (c)	2, 3, 4 (a), 4 (b), 13, 14, 17, 20, 21, 31	III.1 (a)	I (b)	13. Maintaining forest cover to meet present and future needs
1 (b), 7 (a), 7 (b), 8 (c), 8 (g), 9 (a), 10, 11, 12 (d)	4, 5, 6, 12 (b), 12 (e), 14 (c), 16, 17, 18 (a), 19, 22 (g), 24, 25, 26, 28, 32, 33, 34, 36 (e), 38, 39, 40	II	II (a)	14. Financial resources

Forest principles	*Chapter 11 of Agenda 21*	*IPF work programme*	*IFF work programme*	*Elements for consideration*
13, 14	39 (g), 10, 13 (e), 20, 21 (b), 22 (g), 22 (k), 23 (c), 23 (d), 24	IV	II (b)	15. International trade and sustainable forest management
3 (b), 8 (a), 8 (c), 9 (b), 9 (d), 11, 12 (a), 12 (b), 14	1, 3, 5, 12 (e), 15 (d), 24, 26, 31, 33 (c), 37, 35, 39	V.1	II (e)	16. International cooperation in capacity-building and access to, and transfer of, environmentally sound technologies to support sustainable forest management

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Item 5 of the provisional agenda*
International arrangements and mechanisms to promote the management, conservation and sustainable development of all types of forests (programme element III)

International arrangements and mechanisms to promote the management, conservation and sustainable development of all types of forests

Report of the Secretary-General

Summary

The present document, prepared in response to the guidance received from the third session of the Intergovernmental Forum on Forests, presents an analysis of various options for international arrangements and mechanisms to further develop and implement international forest policy. Based on the intergovernmental deliberations on forests at the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, the Intergovernmental Panel on Forests and the Forum, the document identifies:

- Sixteen programme elements that constitute the areas of priority concern that may be addressed by any future international arrangement and mechanism;
- Four principal functions that would need to be performed by any future international arrangement and mechanism: (a) policy development, (b) coordination, (c) policy implementation and (d) provision of legislative authority;
- Ten options for future international arrangements and mechanisms.

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Taking into consideration the work of existing organizations and instruments and the outcome of the various country-led initiatives in support of the Forum, as well as the 10 identified options and the guidance provided by the Forum at its third session, the following approach is proposed for identifying options for international arrangements and mechanisms. First, all options would involve employing a combination of the four principal functions mentioned above. Second, while each option for any future arrangement and mechanism would encompass all four principal functions, at least one principal function would perform a dominant role. Third, based on the four principal functions, the 10 identified options may be grouped into the following four types of arrangements and mechanisms:

Type I. An intergovernmental forum for policy deliberations (dominant principal function: policy development);

Type II. A coordinating mechanism (dominant principal function: coordination);

Type III. A programme for forest policy implementation (dominant principal function: policy implementation);

Type IV. A legally binding instrument (dominant principal function: provision of legislative authority).

The document emphasizes that the role of an international arrangement and mechanism will depend on the principal function or a combination of functions chosen to perform a dominant role. To facilitate comparison and assist in the identification of a preferred international arrangement and mechanism, each option is described according to a common analytical framework.

At its fourth session, the Forum is expected to adopt a report on its work to be submitted to the Commission on Sustainable Development at its eighth session, in April 2000, and to include a recommendation for further action and implementation of an international arrangement and mechanism on forests beyond the year 2000. As stated in its mandate, based on that report and depending on the decision taken by the Commission at its eighth session, the Forum will engage in further action to establish an intergovernmental negotiation process on new arrangements and mechanisms or a legally binding instrument on all types of forests.

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I. Introduction

1. Forests and other wooded lands, covering nearly one third of planet earth's land area, simultaneously provide a wide range of economic, social, cultural and environmental benefits and services. According to the Rio Declaration on Environment and Development[1] and the Non-legally Binding Authoritative Statement of Principles for a Global Consensus on the Management, Conservation and Sustainable Development of All Types of Forests[2] (Forest Principles), negotiated at the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED) in 1992, the overarching principles guiding international forest policy deliberations include:

- States have the sovereign right to utilize their resources to meet their national policy objectives;
- States have the right to economic development in accordance with their social, economic, environmental and political conditions;
- States have common but differentiated responsibilities regarding collective global interests and concerns related to forests;
- States have the responsibility to ensure that activities within their jurisdiction do not cause damage to the environment of other States or of areas beyond the limits of national jurisdiction;
- International cooperation should focus on building human and institutional capacity in developing countries to manage their forests sustainably.

2. The issue of international arrangements and mechanisms to promote the management, conservation and sustainable development of all types of forests has been central to the policy deliberations and negotiations held by the Intergovernmental Panel on Forests (IPF) and Intergovernmental Forum on Forests (IFF). This issue also integrates, in a broader context, the Forest Principles and Agenda 21[3] negotiated at UNCED; all the components of the programmes of work of IPF and IFF, including the possible elements or areas of priority concern; and the possible functions that a given international arrangement and mechanisms should perform. Furthermore, IPF also recognized that:

- At present, there is no global instrument that deals with all types of forests in a comprehensive and holistic manner;
- Reaching consensus and engaging in further action to address the issues of priority concern requires a step-by-step approach conducted in a transparent and participatory manner.

3. An international regime may be defined as a set of agreed principles and policies governing the actions of those involved in specific activities or a set of activities. Based on this working definition, the IFF deliberations on programme element III can be considered as one of the culminating phases of the international cooperative efforts, aimed at establishing consensus on an international regime on all types of forests. Collectively, the Forest Principles, chapter 11 of Agenda 21 and the IPF/IFF proposals for action constitute the main set of agreed principles and policies that guide the actions of those involved in forest activities at the national, regional and global levels. Beyond 2000, the process concerning future intergovernmental arrangements and mechanisms will be determined largely by the recommendations of IFF at its fourth session and the decision adopted by the Commission on Sustainable Development at its eighth session. Whatever the results, it is important to recognize that the foundation for an international regime on forests has already been established.

4. The following documents previously prepared for IPF and IFF are relevant to the present report:

(a) Reports of the Secretary-General on IPF programme element V.2 (International organizations and multilateral institutions) (E/CN.17/IPF/1996/24 and E/CN.17/IPF/1997/5);

(b) Reports of the Secretary-General on IFF programme element II.e (Forest-related work of international and regional organizations) (E/CN.17/IFF/1998/5 and E/CN.17/IFF/1999/15);

(c) Reports of the Secretary-General on IFF programme element III (International arrangements and mechanisms to promote the management, conservation and sustainable development of all types of forests) (E/CN.17/IFF/1998/9 and E/CN.17/IFF/1999/16).

5. The present report is supported by two companion documents: a note by the Secretariat on priority forest policy issues (E/CN.17/IFF/2000/2) and a note by the Secretariat on elements and functions for a future international arrangement and mechanism (E/CN.17/IFF/2000/3). The two notes by the Secretariat are not intended for deliberations and negotiations by the Forum and were prepared to provide background information to assist Governments in their deliberations during the fourth session of IFF.

6. As requested by the Forum, the present document focuses on the analysis of various options for an intergovernmental institutional arrangement and mechanism on forests. Section II describes the consultations undertaken during the preparation of this documentation. Section III contains a brief overview of possible elements and functions. Section IV describes the approach used to identify options according to the four principal functions ((a) policy development, (b) coordination, (c) policy implementation and (d) provision of legislative authority) and four types of international arrangements and mechanisms, (type I, an intergovernmental forum for policy deliberations; type II, a coordinating mechanism; type III, a programme for forest policy implementation; and type IV, a legally binding instrument). Section IV concludes with a brief review of the four types of international arrangements and mechanisms comprising 10 options. Section V contains a detailed analysis of the four types of international arrangements and mechanisms on forests encompassing the 10 options. Each option is described according to a common analytical framework to facilitate comparison. The working definitions of terms used in the present report are described in box 1.

7. Section VI concludes with proposals for action on programme element III, including the main policy decisions that the Forum may wish to recommend for decision by the Commission on Sustainable Development at its eighth session. As stated in its mandate, based on that report and depending on the decision taken by the Commission at its eighth session, the Forum will engage in further action on establishing an intergovernmental negotiation process on new arrangements and mechanisms or a legally binding instrument on all types of forests.

II. Preparations for the fourth session of the Forum

A. Guidance from the third session

8. The Forum, at its third session, requested an analysis of various options for international arrangements and mechanisms to further develop international forest policy deliberations for action in order to promote the management, conservation and sustainable development of all types of forests, focusing on the ability of these options to effectively

perform functions to address elements and estimate the costs of such options. The Forum also requested that this analysis take into account the work of existing organizations and instruments and country-led initiatives, and include at least the following options or a combination of them:

- A mechanism for improved coordination of existing arrangements;
- Ongoing ad hoc intergovernmental dialogue;
- A new permanent forum for intergovernmental dialogue;
- Improvement of non-legally binding instruments;
- A lead body role for an existing organization;
- Use of existing legally binding instruments;
- Regional mechanisms;
- A framework convention allowing for regional mechanisms;
- A new global legal instrument.

Box 1
Working definitions of terms used in the text

Arrangement and mechanism	An intergovernmental institutional arrangement involving one or more organizations, instruments or mechanisms, established to achieve a policy objective(s). *Examples*: FAO, ITTO, WHO, GEF etc.
Element	An area of priority concern and a principal component of the international agenda for action on forests; a possible component of the future programme of work of an arrangement or mechanism. *Examples*: national forest programmes, forest conservation, criteria and indicators etc.
Principal function	Activities performed by an institution or organization to attain its policy objectives. *Example*: "policy development" as a "principal function" of a forum for policy deliberations.
Supportive function	An activity performed by an institution in support of its principal function(s). *Example*: reporting on progress to support the principal function of policy implementation.

B. Inputs received during preparation of documentation for the fourth session

9. The present report and the above-mentioned notes by the Secretariat, were prepared in consultation with members of the Inter-Agency Task Force on Forests (ITFF). Very valuable suggestions, including submissions from various Governments in accordance with the request made at the third session of IFF, were also considered. During the preparation of documentation for the fourth session, the IFF secretariat also benefited from the useful work done under the Costa Rica-Canada initiative, in particular from the outcomes of eight regional consultations held before the end of October 1999, as well as the South Pacific meeting organized by Australia and co-sponsored by Fiji and New Zealand. As a consequence of these inputs, the following additional option was identified for inclusion in the analysis:

- Establish and implement a programme for forest policy implementation.

III. Overview of main elements and functions

A. Possible elements for international action on forests

10. A review of the Forest Principles and chapter 11 of Agenda 21, as well as other chapters of Agenda 21 that include references to forests, indicates a remarkable degree of consistency on elements or areas of priority concern deliberated by Governments during the IPF/IFF process. The various elements, constituting the intergovernmental deliberations on forests, cover a wide spectrum of issues and include areas of priority concern to both developing and developed countries, as well as to both countries richly endowed with forests and those with scarce forest cover. While national forest policy and practices are no longer isolated from global considerations, many regional and global perspectives today also take into consideration the state of forests at the national level. During the past decade, there has been a clear evolution towards a sharper definition of issues and more concrete proposals for action at the national, regional and global levels.

11. Based on the guidance provided by IFF at its third session, as well as a review of forest-related deliberations at UNCED and IPF, 16 elements appear to constitute the areas of priority concern that may be initially addressed by any future international arrangement and mechanism (see box 2). While the proposed list of elements includes 16 generic elements, some items may be added or deleted by the Forum and/or the future international arrangement and mechanism. It is worth noting that all these elements have national, regional and global implications.

Box 2
Set of 16 elements based on UNCED, IPF and IFF deliberations on forests

1. Formulation and implementation of national forest programmes.
2. Promoting public participation.
3. Combating deforestation and forest degradation.
4. Traditional forest-related knowledge.
5. Forest-related scientific knowledge.
6. Forest health and productivity.
7. Criteria and indicators of sustainable forest management.
8. Economic, social and cultural aspects of forests.
9. Forest conservation and protection of unique types of forests and fragile ecosystems.
10. Monitoring, assessment and reporting, and concepts, terminology and definitions.
11. Rehabilitation and conservation strategies for countries with low forest cover.
12. Rehabilitation and restoration of degraded lands, and the promotion of natural and planted forests.
13. Maintaining forest cover to meet present and future needs.
14. Financial resources.
15. International trade and sustainable forest management.
16. International cooperation in capacity-building, and access to and transfer of environmentally sound technologies to support sustainable forest management.

B. Possible functions to be performed by a future international arrangement and mechanism

12. Any future international arrangement and mechanism established to deliberate forest policy would need to employ a toolbox that includes a range of policy instruments to attain its strategic objectives. Based on the guidance provided by IFF at its third session, as well as comments received from various countries and a review of the forest-related deliberations of UNCED, IPF and IFF, it is possible to identify four types of overarching principal functions: (a) policy development; (b) coordination; (c) policy implementation; and (d) provision of legislative authority. These principal functions encompass the 16 supporting functions, identified by IFF at its third session, that may be performed by a future international arrangement and mechanism (see box 3). A crucial component common to most of these principal and supporting functions is that any future international arrangement and mechanism should also make provisions for an open and transparent participatory process that includes all stakeholders.

13. It is important to recognize that the four principal functions and their supporting functions are fundamental to any future international arrangement and mechanism

recommended by the Forum aimed at guiding forest policy actions at the national, regional and global levels. In any international arrangement and mechanism, the four principal functions would be closely interrelated and interdependent in practice. Furthermore, the four principal functions can be combined and performed with a different degree of emphasis in a different international arrangement and mechanism.

Brief description of the principal functions

14. The scope of the four principal functions identified in paragraph 12 are further elaborated below.

Policy development

15. The policy development function would be performed in an intergovernmental forum that would facilitate an exchange of experience, share information, discuss issues of common concern and define appropriate approaches to achieve sustainable forest management. While significant progress has been made by the intergovernmental policy deliberations on various programme elements during the UNCED process and the IPF/IFF process, new emerging forest and forest-related issues will require further deliberations in years to come. This could entail continuation of forest policy development, establishment of priorities, and periodical meetings of ministers responsible for forests to provide political engagement, policy guidance and continue dialogue with major groups.

Box 3
Four principal functions and their associated supporting functions

Policy development

- Elaborating objectives for the global forest policy framework.
- Identifying priority areas for action and addressing emerging issues.
- Exchanging information and experiences, discuss common concerns.
- Programming further global and regional actions.
- Developing of criteria and indicators of sustainable forest management.

Coordination

- Contributing to synergies and identifying and securing coordination and collaboration.
- Enhancing international and regional cooperation.
- Promoting a common understanding of key concepts, terms and definitions.
- Agreeing on global principles of sustainable forest management.

Policy implementation

- Improving effectiveness, efficiency and coordination of bilateral and multilateral assistance.
- Supporting forest policy reform processes.
- Ensuring predictable and sustained funding.
- Supporting the efforts and responding to the needs of developing countries.
- Assessing, reviewing and reporting on progress.

Provision of legislative authority

- Strengthening the level of commitment to implementation.
- Securing political commitment.
- Providing effective governance.

Coordination

16. As reviewed by IFF at its second session (see E/CN.17/IFF/1998/5 and E/CN.17/IFF/1998/11) and at its third session (see E/CN.17/IFF/1999/15) over 20 instruments and about 40 multilateral organizations are engaged, directly or indirectly, in addressing forest and forest-related issues. For efficient and effective use of human, scientific, technical and financial resources, it would be necessary to improve the coordination of policies and activities on forest issues as well as of the forest-related work undertaken by international organizations and instruments. There is also a need to facilitate the comparability of concepts, terminology and definitions in order to articulate effective responses by appropriate international institutions and instruments.

Policy implementation

17. During the IPF/IFF process, intergovernmental deliberations on sustainable forest management have been evolving from principles to practice, i.e., from policy formulation to policy and programme coordination and implementation. The success of an intergovernmental policy process would be determined by the level of political commitment to implement agreed decisions at the subnational, national, regional and global levels. Policy implementation will require a significant increase in both domestic and international as well as public and private funding to build capacity and support sustainable forest management. This could be facilitated by establishing and implementing a comprehensive and cohesive world programme for forest policy implementation on all types of forests. Other important tasks under this function would include having ministers responsible for forests periodically review and assess progress in implementing sustainable management of all types of forests.

Provision of legislative authority

18. This function embraces a wide range of matters, including accountable commitments to policy development and implementation, the status of negotiated agreements and political endorsement. A future international arrangement and mechanism would need to agree and define the negotiation procedures, degree of formality and status of political endorsements, as well as levels of commitment and obligatory reporting to monitor progress at the national, regional and global levels.

IV. Options for future international arrangements and mechanisms

A. Approach for identifying options

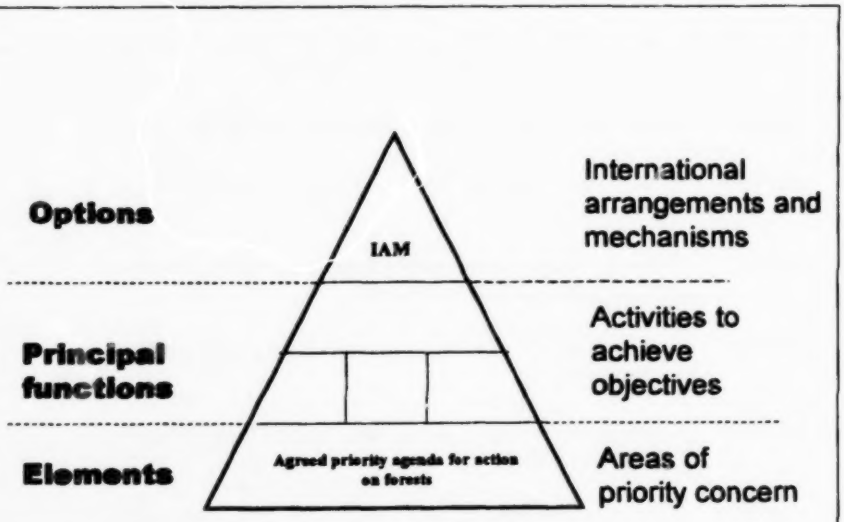
19. In response to the guidance provided by IFF at its third session, the following approach is proposed for identifying options for an international arrangement and mechanism. First, all options would involve employing a combination of four principal functions. Second, while each option for any future international arrangement and mechanism would encompass all four principal functions, at least one principal function would perform a dominant role. Third, based on the four principal functions, the 10 identified options may be grouped into four types of arrangements and mechanisms.

20. Taking into account the work of existing organizations and instruments and the outcomes from country-led initiatives, the Forum may wish to consider the model presented in the figure to facilitate the identification of possible options for an international arrangement and mechanism. This model is based on:

(a) The set of 16 elements (see box 2);

(b) The four principal functions (see box 3);

(c) The four types of arrangements and mechanisms (see box 4).



Model for the identification of possible options for an international arrangement and mechanism (IAM), based on principal functions to be performed to address agreed areas of priority concerns

21. This model has been prepared to simplify the menu of possible arrangements and mechanisms, and to facilitate the Forum in determining the format of an international arrangement and mechanism. It shows the important role of a dominant principal function in identifying an option. The four types of international arrangements and mechanisms encompassing 10 possible options are presented in accordance with this model in box 4.

Box 4
Four types of international arrangements and mechanisms on all types of forests, and their associated dominant principal functions and options

Type I. *An intergovernmental forum for policy deliberations (dominant principal function: policy development)*

Option 1. Continue ongoing ad hoc intergovernmental forest policy deliberations.

Option 2. Establish a new permanent intergovernmental forum for forest policy deliberations.

Type II. *A coordinating mechanism (dominant principal function: coordination)*

Option 3. Establish a mechanism for improved coordination of existing arrangements on forests.

Option 4. Mandate lead body role to an existing forest-related organization.

Type III. *A programme for forest policy implementation (dominant principal function: policy implementation)*

Option 5. Improve non-legally binding instruments on forests.

Option 6. Establish and implement a programme for forest policy implementation.

Type IV. *A legally binding instrument (dominant principal function: provision of legislative authority)*

Option 7. Extend the scope of existing forest-related legally binding instruments.

Option 8. Restructure existing or create new regional legally binding instruments on forests.

Option 9. Negotiate a framework convention on forests, allowing for regional protocols.

Option 10. Negotiate a new legally binding instrument on all types of forests.

B. Integrating elements, functions and options

22. The model presented in the figure suggests that the elements presented in box 2 would constitute the basis for the programme of work of whatever option of a future international

arrangement and mechanism is identified. It is recognized that this core generic set of elements is likely to evolve in response to emerging issues and shifting priorities. In addition, any future international arrangement and mechanism selected by the Forum would also perform the four principal functions and supporting functions defined in box 3. The arrangement of principal functions would then determine the design of international arrangements and mechanisms. For example, if the policy development function plays a dominant role, the option for the international arrangement and mechanism would be: option 1 (Continue ongoing ad hoc intergovernmental deliberations) or option 2 (Establish a new permanent intergovernmental forum for policy deliberations). Similarly, if the dominant role is played by the policy implementation function, the options would be option 5 (Improve and implement legally non-binding instruments on forests) or option 6 (Establish and implement a programme for forest policy implementation).

23. The 10 options presented in box 4 for a possible future international arrangement and mechanism are not entirely mutually exclusive. Several complement each other and new combinations can be formulated in order to assign dominant roles to more than one principal function. For example, the policy development function under option 2 (Establish a new permanent intergovernmental forum for policy deliberations) could also be embodied under option 6 (Establish and implement a programme for forest policy implementation), whose dominant function is policy implementation. In such a case, the formulation phase of the action programme would require active policy deliberations in a forum for setting priorities, and the implementation phase would need a forum for assessing, reviewing and reporting on progress.

24. The four types of international arrangements and mechanisms and the 10 possible options identified in the present report should be considered only as illustrative examples of the many possible combinations towards an international arrangement and mechanism that can be formulated at this stage of the negotiations in the IPF/IFF process. This approach is flexible and would allow the international arrangement and mechanism to evolve and respond to changing needs and circumstances, as well as to undertake more accountable commitments to policy development and implementation.

V. Analysis of options for an international arrangement and mechanism on forests

A. Analytical framework

25. A common analytical framework has been applied to describe each option, including the four principal functions and two major factors — institutional and financial implications.

26. To facilitate the analysis and comparison of the various options and identify their possible combination, a detailed description of the four types of arrangements and mechanisms encompassing the 10 identified options is set out below.

Type I. An intergovernmental forum for policy deliberations

Dominant principal function

Policy development

Options

1. Continue ongoing ad hoc intergovernmental forest policy deliberations.

2. Establish a new permanent intergovernmental forum for forest policy deliberations.

Policy development function

27. Policy development would be the dominant principal function, for both options 1 and 2, and would involve providing a forum for intergovernmental forest policy deliberations. Under option 1, policy deliberations would continue by extending the duration of IFF and give it a set of clearly defined functions. Under option 2, policy deliberations would continue through the establishment of a new permanent forum as a successor to the IPF/IFF process, under the aegis of the Commission on Sustainable Development and the Economic and Social Council.

28. In both cases, the mandate would be established by the Commission at its eighth session, following the recommendations of IFF at its fourth session. This mandate could include elements similar to those defined for the IPF/IFF process, such as:

(a) To pursue consensus and formulate options for further actions to combat deforestation and forest degradation and to promote the management, conservation and sustainable development of all types of forests;

(b) To promote cross-sectoral action at the national and international levels consistent with the forest principles;

(c) To identify needs for international cooperation towards the management, conservation and sustainable development of all types of forests;

(d) To provide a high-level forum for interested parties to exchange experiences, discuss concerns, agree on conclusions, and provide proposals for action to achieve sustainable forest management. Periodic meetings of ministers responsible for forests could be desirable for priority setting, policy guidance and political commitments.

Coordinating function

29. Under both options, the high-level forum would coordinate the proposals for action addressed to the forest-related work of international and regional organizations and under existing instruments, as well as through the coordination of work performed by ITFF.

Policy implementation function

30. The implementation of proposals for action adopted by the forum would be the responsibility of countries, international and regional organizations, existing instruments, the private sector and the major groups.

31. The main mechanism for the implementation of the proposals for action would be national forest programmes and land-use plans, assisted by members of ITFF, and supported by bilateral and multilateral financial agencies, as well as bilateral assistance programmes.

32. As in the IPF/IFF process, the new forum would facilitate the participation of all interested parties, including Governments, international and regional intergovernmental bodies, international organizations, non-governmental organizations, the private sector and major groups.

Provision of legislative authority

33. Under both options, the intergovernmental conclusions, proposals for action and decisions adopted by the forum would not be legally binding. However, the legislative authority would be provided by proposals for action, Commission decisions, and by Economic and Social Council and General Assembly resolutions, as appropriate.

Institutional implications

34. No additional governing body would be required under these two options. No major institutional implications would be envisaged with other existing organizations and instruments, except the need to recognize the forum as an ad hoc intergovernmental forum (option 1) or as a new permanent subsidiary body under the Commission/Council structure (option 2).

35. Both options would require periodic, at least annual intergovernmental meetings. Consideration could be given to hold periodic (for example, every three years) meetings of ministers responsible for forests to renew political engagement and commitments, for political guidance and to review progress.

36. Options 1 and 2 would require the establishment of a small secretariat similar to that of IPF/IFF, hosted by the Department of Economic and Social Affairs of the United Nations Secretariat or any other member of ITFF.

Financial implications

37. Both options have programme budget implications. The sources of funds for option 1 might also be covered either by voluntary contributions and/or from the regular United Nations budget. In case of option 2, the funds for the operation of a permanent forum would come from the regular budget of the United Nations and/or from the member of ITFF who is hosting the secretariat, including secretariat staff and all related operational costs. Major activities would involve travel of participants from developing countries, substantive support and conference service requirements.

Follow-up action after the fourth session of IFF

38. If option 1 were adopted, the Commission at its eighth session might wish to request the Council to define the mandate, as appropriate, and the duration of IFF for a specified period. The fifth meeting of IFF could be convened in autumn 2000 to elaborate the new programme of work and operationalize other decisions adopted by the Commission at its eighth session.

39. Adoption of option 2 would require the Commission at its eighth session to request the Council or the governing body of another ITFF member to establish a permanent forum. The first organizational meeting of the permanent forum could be convened during the fourth quarter of 2000.

Type II. A coordinating mechanism

Dominant principal function

Coordination

Options

3. Establish a mechanism for improved coordination of existing arrangements on forests.

4. Mandate lead body role to an existing forest-related organization.

Policy development function

40. Option 3 would require that ITFF be used as the basis for the establishment of a new high-level, inter-agency coordination committee on forests. Policies would be developed mainly by the governing bodies of institutions as members of the Committee. Under this option, it would also have to be considered whether there is a need to continue ITFF itself. Policy formulation would be direct, through administrative policy guidelines of participating agencies. However, there would be limited direct participation by Governments in overall policy development.

41. Under option 4, policies would be developed primarily in the governing body of the lead organization. Inputs from governing bodies of other institutions should be encouraged. In both options 3 and 4, the provision of a forum for policy deliberation would be required to maintain dialogue on matters of mutual concern. Such a forum could be provided by any existing member of the Committee (option 3) or the governing body of the selected lead organization (option 4).

Coordination function

42. Coordination, the dominant principal function under options 3 and 4, would involve coordination at all levels, both for policy development and for policy implementation and operational programmes. However, a committee would be effective only if constituted at a high level, and if it involved those directly involved in policy formulation and programme implementation.

43. Under option 3, an existing institutional arrangement on forests could be assigned the responsibility to put into practice a formal (for example, Inter-Agency Commission on Sustainable Development (IACSD)-type high-level) mechanism to encourage improved coordination on forests and forest-related issues.

44. Option 4 would require assigning an existing organization with a strong programme on forests and forest-related matters the responsibility to lead the coordination of forest-related work of a large number of organizations and instruments.

Policy implementation function

45. The formal mechanism for coordination under option 3 implies the establishment of a collaborative and coordinated set of actions at the national, regional and global levels.

However, the request for implementation of actions will be addressed primarily to individual organizations and instruments.

46. Option 4 would involve the assignment of coordinating responsibility to an existing organization. This function would include catalysing, orchestrating and facilitating the implementation of an agreed international agenda on forests. It would also need the support of ITFF and other international organizations and instruments.

Provision of legislative authority

47. Under both options 3 and 4, the policy decisions adopted by the international organizations would not be legally binding. Under option 3, a memorandum of understanding and/or decisions by the governing bodies of organizations and instruments members of the Committee would be necessary to establish the formal mechanism.

48. Option 4 would require a decision from the governing body of the leading organization, accepting the responsibility of this new expanded role and instructing the head of the organization to implement the necessary administrative and programme arrangements.

Institutional implications

49. No additional governing bodies would be required under options 3 and 4. Option 3 would require establishing a small secretariat to service and undertake substantive analysis on priority issues, propose coordination and undertake follow-up action to support the coordinating mechanism. The secretariat would also assist member organizations in the implementation of agreed actions. Option 4 would involve the establishment of a new unit in the lead organization, equipped with appropriate financial and human resources, including costs for staff, meetings and operations.

50. Both options would require periodic, at least annual inter-agency meetings. Intergovernmental meetings to set priorities for guiding coordination efforts would have to be convened periodically at the global or regional levels. Implementation of either option 3 or 4 would require governing bodies of the organizations and instruments concerned to formally accept their participation in the coordinating mechanism.

Financial implications

51. Under option 3, the funding requirements for operations would be covered mostly from resources made available by the organizations and instruments that are members of the mechanism. However, there would be a need to also encourage voluntary contributions from countries to support the mechanism.

52. Under option 4, the funds for the operations of a new unit in an existing organization, assigned the lead responsibility to coordinate forest-related work, would come mainly from the regular budget of the organization concerned and subject to a decision by its governing body. Voluntary contributions from countries might be required for supporting specific activities, such as servicing intergovernmental meetings.

Follow-up action after the fourth session of IFF

53. If option 3 were adopted, the Commission on Sustainable Development, at its eighth session, through the Economic and Social Council, might wish to invite the governing bodies of ITFF members to authorize their secretariats and appropriate units to become involved in the establishment of a formal new mechanism, a high-level, inter-agency coordination committee on forests, with a specific mandate to coordinate the forest-related work of

existing organizations and instruments. It might also wish to encourage the Committee to use ITFF as the core group for establishing the mechanism and consider enlarging its membership by inviting other key organizations and instruments to join the mechanism.

54. Adoption of option 4 would require the Commission to request the Council to request the governing body of the organization selected to lead the coordination of forest-related work, to accept the lead role and include this function as a new mandate in its programme of work, and to report periodically on progress to the Commission/Council.

Type III. A programme for forest policy implementation

Dominant principal function

Policy implementation

Options

5. Improve non-legally binding instruments on forests.

6. Establish and implement a programme for forest policy implementation.

Policy development function

55. Under this type of arrangement, the policy development function would involve a periodic review of the non-legally binding instruments relevant to forests, including the Forest Principles, chapter 11 of Agenda 21, the IPF/IFF proposals for action, and such initiatives as the voluntary initiatives on criteria and indicators for sustainable forest management.

56. Both options would require an ad hoc or permanent forum (see options 1 and 2) for setting priorities for action through national, regional and global programmes and activities as the main focus for policy deliberations. Option 6 would require a forum to undertake deliberations to formulate a programme for forest policy implementation, monitor implementation and adopt decisions on major policy issues. Under this type of arrangement, it is also possible to envisage, as an option, the establishment of a new organization, with its own governing body.

Coordinating function

57. The coordination of policies and programmes of various institutions and instruments would be essential in any of the two options identified. Option 6 would provide an opportunity to launch a programme for forest policy implementation on all types of forests that could be implemented in a decentralized and coordinated manner by existing forest-related organizations and instruments.

Policy implementation function

58. The dominant principal function under both options would be the implementation of an action-oriented programme at the national, regional and global levels, primarily through a country-driven process.

59. The improvement of the non-legally binding instruments covered under option 5 would not involve a revision of their texts but instead focus on increasing their rate of implementation at the local, national, regional and global levels. In the context of policy implementation, such improvement would mean predictable and sustained funding for the implementation of concrete programmes and activities, or further evolution towards the establishment of a world forest action programme as presented under option 6. ITFF or the proposed formal committee proposed under option 3 above could become the core institutional group for assisting Governments in implementing a programme for forest policy implementation, included under option 6.

Provision of legislative authority

60. Under both options 5 and 6 policy decisions would be taken by an ad hoc or permanent forum (see options 1 and 2 above) or another designated body. Those decisions would not be legally binding. Option 6 would require a major decision from the Commission on Sustainable Development/Economic and Social Council or even the General Assembly to launch a new comprehensive programme for forest policy implementation on all types of forests, with specific institutional and financial arrangements to support its implementation and operations.

Institutional implications

61. Option 5 would have no major institutional implications. Option 6, if structured as a decentralized action programme, might not require the creation of a new bureaucracy or an institution, or any major institutional changes in existing international organizations and instruments. The implementation of a programme for forest policy implementation would be consistent with a well-defined set of roles and responsibilities for existing organizations and instruments. As in the case of ITFF, specific responsibilities to implement key areas of priority concern included in the agreed international forest agenda could be agreed upon by assigning leading roles on specific programme elements to different international and regional organizations and instruments. However, the establishment of a forum would be necessary, both for the formulation of such a programme and for monitoring progress in its implementation.

Financial implications

62. Options 5 and 6 have cost implications associated with conference services for forum meetings, substantive support and a small secretariat. The sources of funds for option 5 could be covered by new voluntary financial contributions from different sources provided to developing countries, ITFF members and other international organizations and instruments.

63. Option 6, in addition, implies the launching of a decentralized global programme on all types of forests, as defined by countries. In the implementation of such a programme, all ITFF members and other relevant forest-related international and regional organizations, as well as existing instruments, would participate as equal partners. The source of predictable and sustained funds would depend on contributions from Governments and the support of the lead agencies in charge of implementing different subprogrammes and/or activities. It might require the establishment of a special financial mechanism, such as a forest fund, or to insert sustainable forest management as a new priority in an existing global financial mechanism or facility.

Follow-up action after the fourth session of IFF

64. If option 5 were adopted, the Commission at its eighth session might wish to request the Council to invite the governing bodies of ITFF organization members and other relevant international organizations and instruments to insert the full implementation of the Forest Principles, chapter 11 of Agenda 21 and the IPF/IFF proposals for action as a priority in their next work programme and budget.

65. If option 6 were adopted, the Commission at its eighth session might wish to request the Council to invite Governments, the governing bodies and executive heads of ITFF organization members to initiate the preparation of a programme for forest policy implementation, as the immediate substantive follow-up of the IPF/IFF process. The elaboration of such a programme might take two to three years in order to facilitate maximum participation by Governments, NGOs, the private sector, international and regional organizations, existing instruments and major groups. It might require three or four sessions of any institution established as a successor of IFF (see options 1 and 2) to guide the preparation process as well as to revise successive drafts of the proposed programme. A proposal for a programme for forest policy implementation could be presented for the consideration and approval of Governments in early 2002, for further presentation for adoption by the Commission at its tenth session, in April 2002 (10-year review of UNCED). Full implementation with appropriate provision of funding could start in January 2003.

Type IV. A legally binding instrument

Dominant principal function

Provision of legislative authority

Options

7. Extend the scope of existing forest-related legally binding instruments.

8. Restructure existing or create new regional legally binding instruments on forests.

9. Negotiate a framework convention on forests, allowing for regional protocols.

10. Negotiate a new legally binding instrument on all types of forests.

Policy development function

66. All four options noted above would provide a forum for policy formulation on current and emerging forest issues through deliberations of their conferences of parties. Policy development would follow the already agreed objectives and principles in the instrument concerned. The text of each instrument would also contain the fundamental rules and obligations of a substantive as well as of a procedural character.

67. Under option 7, the main focus would be on forest-related issues under an existing instrument formulated to address other global issues (e.g., combating desertification or climate change), which might not necessarily be an issue aimed specifically at forests. Under

option 8, policies would be developed with a focus on regional forest issues. Under options 9 and 10, policy development would focus more at the global level, with special reference to regional protocols in case of option 9. The protocols would elaborate and specify the objectives and principles of the framework convention, i.e., by setting up specific obligations related to an issue, or might provide a region-oriented context as well as take into account existing regional processes and instruments.

Coordinating function

68. Under options 8 to 10, the conferences of parties would foster their coordination of tasks through decisions aimed to establish synergies with other existing instruments and international and regional organizations, as well as to influence the programme of work of those institutions. The conferences of parties could also establish either ad hoc or formal coordinating mechanisms to improve efficiency and effectiveness in the implementation of their adopted work programmes and planned activities.

69. One of the important tasks under any of options 8 to 10 would be to establish effective collaboration and coordination for elaborating forest-related concepts, terminology and definitions that would become part of the negotiated and agreed text of any of the four types of legally binding instruments.

Policy implementation function

70. These four options would include an agreement to implement a programme of work, adopted by the various conferences of parties concerned.

71. Under option 7, it is implicit that the programme of work of a "protocol on forests" would be an instrument attached to the ongoing programmes of work of existing forest-related conventions. Under option 8, regional arrangements would involve a number of separate programmes of work that are regionally oriented and initiated as a number of regional or subregional conventions on forests, without reference to global responsibilities and global forest issues of common interest. Although option 9 implies mainly a new framework convention on all types of forests, it leaves open the possibility for subsequent negotiations to formulate a series of regional programmes of work, to be included as regional protocols or "attached instruments" to a global framework convention on all types of forests.

72. The protocol approach means that issues of a global nature and which require implementation measures by all countries at the national level would be addressed in the framework convention. The protocols could deal with such issues as the need to promote regional standards or regional approaches to the management, conservation and sustainable development of forests, and the need to address a limited number of specific issues in a more comprehensive way. Option 10, as a new convention on all types of forests, would have its own global programme of work, formulated by taking into account the programme of work of other relevant conventions, and would encompass all the different possibilities and characteristics identified under options 8, 9 and 10 involving actions at the global, regional, national and local levels.

Provision of legislative authority

73. **The dominant principal function under options 8 to 10 would be the formulation and application of a legally binding instrument on all types of forests, either attached to an existing instrument or as new instruments designed for specific negotiation and implementation at the regional or global levels.**

74. The main legislative authority under these four options would be based on the text of a legal instrument signed and ratified by all parties concerned. The policy directions for the implementation of the work programme and other related policy actions and decisions would be adopted by the conferences of the parties at periodic meetings or by another institutional arrangement designated by the parties.

Institutional implications

75. Option 7 would imply the establishment of a special working group within the conferences of parties concerned, to work for at least two years, with a specific mandate to elaborate a protocol on forest-related issues (for example, on forest-related biodiversity issues under the Convention on Biological Diversity or on forest-related climate change issues under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change. Such a protocol would be further presented for the consideration and approval of the conferences of parties of conventions concerned, and if adopted would be inserted as an attached instrument to the existing instrument. Before entering into force, the protocol would also require signature and further ratification by all parties. The secretariats of existing instruments would need to be expanded to recruit new staff to administrate and service the implementation of the forest protocol attached to individual instruments. Furthermore, separate special meetings of parties would be required, as in the case of the Montreal Protocol to the Vienna Convention for the Protection of the Ozone Layer, the Kyoto Protocol to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change or the Biosafety Protocol to the Convention on Biological Diversity.

76. Option 8 would require the launching of a series of parallel regional processes, during a period of one or two years, consisting of the establishment of an equal number of regional negotiating committees for the elaboration of regional instruments on forests. Such committees would need to meet at least three times every six or eight months to negotiate and review the draft texts of the regional instruments. Each of these processes would culminate with a regional intergovernmental meeting for the adoption and signature of a regional instrument and the establishment of a regional conference of parties. Servicing of each of these regional processes could be based on any existing regional intergovernmental institutions; otherwise, the regional commissions, an existing regional intergovernmental body or an existing instrument would be required to act as secretariat.

77. Options 9 and 10 would require the establishment, within the United Nations system, of an intergovernmental negotiating committee by the General Assembly as the successor to IFF. The main task of such a committee, in both cases, would be to initiate the elaboration and negotiation of a legally binding instrument on all types of forests. The first organizational meeting of the committee could take place in autumn 2000. Both options imply a period of intergovernmental negotiations and revisions of successive draft texts of a convention for at least two to three years. Under both options, the committee would need to meet twice a year during 2001 and 2002, and could culminate with a United Nations conference on all types of forests to revise, adopt and sign a global convention on all types of forests in 2003.

Financial implications

78. The formulation and negotiation process of the four options 7 to 10 have programme budget implications and would require a substantive amount of resources. Option 8 might require additional resources if it were decided to have protocols on forests attached to more than one existing instrument (for example to the above-mentioned Conventions and to the World Trade Organization (WTO)). Option 8 would also involve additional resources if

more than five or six regional and/or subregional instruments were negotiated. Some savings could be made in the preparation of documentation and interpretation services if fewer United Nations official languages were used. Options 9 and 10 would require full coverage by a United Nations special secretariat, and preparation of documentation, planning and negotiations in all six official languages of the United Nations. Under these four options, the establishment of financial mechanisms for supporting the implementation of the work programme of the instrument concerned would also have to be considered.

Follow-up action after the fourth session of IFF

79. If option 7 were adopted, the Commission on Sustainable Development at its eighth session might wish to request the General Assembly to invite the conferences of parties of existing instruments concerned, identified as relevant by IFF at its fourth session, to initiate the preparation of special protocols on forests and report to the Commission on progress.

80. If option 8 were adopted, the Commission on Sustainable Development at its eighth session might wish to request regional intergovernmental bodies to initiate the preparation of regional legally binding instruments on forests and report to the Commission on progress.

81. If options 9 or 10 were adopted, then the Commission on Sustainable Development at its eighth session might decide to request the Economic and Social Council to establish an international negotiating committee for a framework convention on all types of forests, as the successor of IFF supported by the United Nations regular budget, securing inter-agency cooperation and including a substantive secretariat attached to the Department of Economic and Social Affairs or another selected United Nations body or other intergovernmental bodies. The first organizational meeting of the committee could be convened either in New York or at Geneva, no later than autumn 2000.

B. Estimated costs

82. During the IPF/IFF process, total costs have been met through provisions for conference-servicing by the United Nations; voluntary contributions from Governments to the IPF/IFF Trust Fund; and in-kind contributions from ITFF members.

83. With regard to estimated costs for each option, the Forum may wish to note that all options for establishing an international arrangement and mechanism will have cost implications, depending on mandate, modalities of operation, location and programme of work. In case the Commission at its eighth session decides to establish an international arrangement and mechanism, accurate cost implications would be attached in accordance with that decision.

84. The cost of any new international arrangement and mechanism will also be influenced by the function that would play a dominant role. For example, if policy development is the dominant principal function, then a large part of its budget would be devoted to providing a forum and servicing of meetings; if coordination is the dominant principal function, then its budget would be allocated mainly to cover a forum for the meetings of an inter-agency coordination committee on forests and for consulting appropriate partners and experts; and if the dominant principal function is policy implementation, then its budget would focus on a forum for the formulation of priorities, an action programme and the implementation of such a programme. However, the possibility of combining two or more options and the performance of their dominant principal functions may lead to more effective and efficient use of resources and operations, and provide an opportunity for creating synergies and substantial savings by achieving economies of scale. For example, if options 2, 3 and 6 are

combined, there would be some savings in costs of Professional staff and support service engaged by the secretariat to service policy development, coordination and implementation.

85. At the present stage, it is not possible to make an estimation of the costs associated with any particular option for a future international arrangement and mechanism. As noted above, the administrative, personnel and servicing costs of the new arrangement and mechanism would largely depend on its mandate, modalities of operation, location and programme of work. However, for illustrative purposes, the Forum may wish to consider the following as indicative figures related to basic administrative, personnel and servicing costs for which provisions should be made.

	Thousands of US$ year
Administrative and personnel	
Secretariat (core staff of 8 Professionals + 3 General Service + 1 Administrative Assistant), salaries and benefits, based in New York	1 700
Staff travel	200
Senior Consultants	72
Subtotal	**1 972**
Servicing costs	
Servicing meetings (One international meeting of 10 days, two meetings per day, held at United Nations premises. Includes translators, editors, interpreters, documents in six official languages, equipment and meeting room facilities.)	350
Participation of representatives from developing countries	180
Subtotal	**530**
Total	**2 502**

86. The actual size of the secretariat and associated costs would depend on the type of arrangement and/or mechanism selected. It is suggested that whatever institutional arrangement and/or mechanism is selected, it should be supported by a strong inter-agency cooperation and voluntary contributions from Governments for implementing its programme of work. It is also suggested that the new arrangement and mechanism be serviced by a small inter-agency type of secretariat constituted by senior experts in different forest and forest-related issues. This type of secretariat, engaging and representing the expertise and knowledge of forest and forest-related organizations and instruments, has been very successful in securing inter-agency cooperation to service the IPF/IFF process. The Forum may wish to consider the advantages of continuing with this type of secretariat to service any new arrangement and/or mechanism.

VI. Conclusions and proposals for action

87. The text presented below has been prepared to assist intergovernmental deliberations during the fourth session of IFF on possible conclusions and proposals for action by IFF on programme element III.

A. Conclusions

88. The Forest Principles, chapter 11 of Agenda 21, the IPF proposals for action and the IFF deliberations, as well as many other initiatives, have all recognized the need to address forest-related issues in an integrated and comprehensive manner, and have emphasized that there are many complex and interrelated issues that either directly or indirectly affect forests. Deliberations on programme element III, at the second and third sessions of IFF, concluded that there is no global instrument that deals with all types of forests in a comprehensive and holistic manner.

89. The deliberations of instruments, mechanisms and programmes of the existing international forest regime are rather isolated from each other and fragmented in their implementation. There is a need for sustained partnership and strong political commitment to fully implement the existing programmes, mechanisms and instruments, which to date have produced only partial results.

90. Collectively, all the elements included in the Forest Principles, chapter 11 of Agenda 21 and the IPF/IFF programme of work constitute the basis for the international agenda for action on forests and reflect the areas of priority concern required to assess, maintain, protect and restore all types of forests. Those generic elements will probably evolve in response to merging issues and shifting priorities. They also include the national and international cooperation necessary to address these concerns and could constitute the basis of a programme of work for future intergovernmental deliberations on forests.

91. IFF may also consider it appropriate to continue the intergovernmental deliberations on forests and forest-related issues in a new intergovernmental arrangement and mechanism on all types of forests. Such forest policy deliberations must involve political commitment and be high-level and action-oriented. The new intergovernmental arrangement and mechanism should include four principal functions: (a) policy development; (b) coordination; (c) policy implementation; and (d) provision of legislative authority, plus 16 supporting functions. A crucial component common to these principal and supporting functions is that any future international arrangement and mechanism should make appropriate provisions for an open, transparent and participatory process that includes all stakeholders. The mandate assigned to the new international arrangement and mechanism would be determined on the basis of which principal function or combination of functions is recommended by IFF at its fourth session for performing a dominant role.

92. The four types of international arrangements and mechanisms on forests and the 10 possible options identified above are only illustrative examples of the many possible combinations that could be formulated. If a new international arrangement and mechanism on all types of forests is established, it would probably evolve and respond to future changing needs and circumstances, and undertake more accountable commitments to policy development and implementation.

93. The secretariat established to service the new international arrangement and mechanism could be based on the inter-agency cooperation successfully employed to service the IPF/IFF process.

B. Proposals for action

94. The Forum may wish to:

(a) Request the Commission on Sustainable Development at its eighth session to consider the establishment of a new international arrangement and mechanism to promote the management, conservation and sustainable development of all types of forests, based on a mandate which the Forum may wish to draft at its fourth session for transmission to the Commission attached to the present request;

(b) Request the Commission at its eighth session to invite the Forum to convene a fifth session in autumn 2000 in order to follow up the decision of the Commission on this matter;

(c) Request the international organizations and instruments members of the Inter-Agency Task Force on Forests to continue their support to the proposed new arrangement and its secretariat.

Notes

[1] *Report of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, Rio de Janeiro, 3-14 June 1992*, vol. I, *Resolutions Adopted by the Conference* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.92.I.8 and corrigendum), resolution 1, annex I.

[2] Ibid., annex III.

[3] Ibid., annex II.

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Item 3 (a) of the provisional agenda*
Promoting and facilitating the implementation of the proposals for action of the Intergovernmental Panel on Forests, and reviewing, monitoring and reporting on progress in the management, conservation and sustainable development of all types of forests: promoting and facilitating implementation (programme element I.a)

Promoting and facilitating implementation

Note by the Secretariat

Programme element I.a was not discussed by the Intergovernmental Forum on Forests at its third session and is not covered in the report of the Forum on that session (E/CN.17/IFF/1999/25). Accordingly, section I.A of the report of the Forum on its second session (E/CN.17/IFF/1998/14) is reproduced in the annex in order to facilitate discussion of this programme element at the fourth session of the Forum.

* E/CN.17/IFF/2000/1.

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Annex

Extract from section I of the report of the Intergovernmental Forum on Forests on its second session*

A. Promoting and facilitating implementation (programme element I.a)

Preliminary conclusions

1. The Forum welcomed the commitment, expressed by Governments, international organizations and other partners, to the implementation of all the Forum's proposals for action and noted with appreciation the many activities at the national level initiated by countries, groups of countries and international organizations. It noted the added attention given to the social and environmental services provided by forests as well as the challenges to address these issues. It emphasized the need for the effective involvement of relevant interested parties, as well as the improvement of institutional arrangements and appropriate ways and means of communication.

2. The Forum underscored the need for implementation of strategies in terms of investment, mobilization of domestic and international resources and — in the case of developing countries, with special attention to least developed countries and developing countries with low forest cover — appropriate financial mechanisms and/or measures including support through official development assistance (ODA).

3. The Forum considered national forest programmes, as defined by IPF, to be a viable framework for addressing forest sector issues, including implementation of IPF's proposals for action in a holistic, comprehensive and multisectoral manner. It took note of the national case studies prepared under the Six-country Initiative of Finland, Germany, Honduras, Indonesia, Uganda and the United Kingdom, as well as of the Baden-Baden workshop and its results. This initiative was considered an important contribution to the assessment of IPF's proposals for action at the national level, and for supporting implementation work at national and subnational levels. The Initiative had recognized the diversity of national conditions and interested parties in assessing the relevance and prioritization of the proposals at the national level, and had also produced a useful Practitioners Guide, which should be revised to facilitate assessment exercises. In order to enhance the implementation of the proposals for action adopted by IPF, the Forum identified the need for effective follow-up and long-term commitment at all levels.

4. The Forum noted that the IPF's proposals for action were numerous and complex and covered a wide range of important issues. The Forum recognized that sustainable forest management was a long-term process and goal and countries would not, within a limited time-frame, be able to show substantial progress in capacity-building, policy development, planning processes and creation of enabling and supporting infrastructure. The Forum underlined the need for sustained efforts in implementing IPF's proposals.

5. The Forum recognized that IPF implementation by developing countries with low forest cover merited special attention. It called on the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), as the lead agency for this programme element, to expedite the development of a definition of low forest cover as contained in IPF's proposals for action. It invited the Global Environment Facility (GEF) as well as the relevant environmental conventions, including the Convention on Biological Diversity,[1] the United Nations

* E/CN.17/IFF/1998/14.

Framework Convention on Climate Change[2] and the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification in those Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, particularly in Africa,[3] and international financing institutions to look into and reflect on the special needs of developing countries with low forest cover, and called upon the informal, high-level Inter-Agency Task Force on Forests to coordinate its work in supporting these countries.

6. The Forum expressed support for the work carried out by the informal, high-level Inter-Agency Task Force on Forests. It noted that the Task Force had been and continued to be an effective means of support of the IPF/Forum process and of informal inter-agency coordination on forests. In future, the work of the Task Force should be strengthened and further developed.

7. The Forum took note of the continuing monitoring of the effects of airborne pollutants on forests within member countries of the International Cooperative Programme on Forests (ICP Forests), as well as the establishment of new protocols dealing with nitrogen, heavy metals and persistent pollutants under the Geneva Convention on Long-Range Transboundary Air Pollution,[4] as well as the beginning of regional cooperation on a monitoring network on acid rain among countries in Eastern Asia. It noted with appreciation the offer by some countries to extend their cooperation to interested countries not presently participating in international networks.

8. The Forum also took note of recent regional and international initiatives that are supportive of implementation of the IPF proposals for action, including the strengthening of the Sub-Network of Protected Areas of the Amazon, agreed by the Ministers of Environment of the Parties to the Amazon Cooperation Treaty, in March 1998; recent developments within the framework of the Central American Convention on Forests; the regional workshops on IPF implementation held in Indonesia in February 1998, in Senegal in April 1998 and in Chile in June 1998, under the auspices of the FAO Regional Forestry Commissions for Asia and the Pacific, Africa and Latin America and the Caribbean; the Ministerial Conference on the Protection of Forests in Europe held in Portugal in July 1998; and the G-8 Forest Action Program endorsed by G-8 Heads of State in May 1998 in England (the Group of Eight, or G-8, comprises the United States of America, Japan, Germany, France, Italy, the United Kingdom, Canada and the Russian Federation).

Important elements for the implementation of IPF's proposals for action

9. The Forum agreed that the following are particularly important for the implementation of IPF's proposals for action:

(a) [Provision, taking into consideration the relevant chapters of Agenda 21[5] and paragraph 10 of the Non-legally Binding Authoritative Statement of Principles for a Global Consensus on the Management, Conservation and Sustainable Development of All Types of Forests (Forest Principles),[6] by the international donor community, international organizations and international financial institutions of new and additional resources, including through innovative mechanisms and/or measures] to mobilize finance, technical assistance and transfer of environmentally sound technology at the international and domestic levels, as well as through better use of existing mechanisms and measures, to support national forest programmes in developing countries, and countries with economies in transition, in particular countries with low forest cover and with fragile forest ecosystems;

(b) Promotion, where appropriate, of an integrated approach by countries through their national forest programmes as defined by IPF, and in collaboration with international organizations, to the implementation of the IPF proposals for action and forest-related work

as set out under the Convention on Biological Diversity, the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification in those Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, particularly in Africa, and the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change;

(c) Creation and/or strengthening, by countries and international organizations, of initiatives, approaches and partnerships, which could include partnership agreements, to encourage long-term political commitment; relevant, effective, sustained and reliable donor support; and participation by the private sector and major groups; as well as recognition of the special role of official development assistance (ODA) in meeting the needs of developing countries, in particular least developed countries and countries with low forest cover;

(d) A systematic assessment, by all countries, of IPF's proposals for action and planning for their implementation in the context of countries' own national processes aimed at sustainable forest management;

(e) Implementation by countries of the IPF's proposals for action in the context of their national forest programmes/national policy framework in a coordinated manner and with the participation of all interested parties. Clear objectives and criteria should help promote effective implementation of sustainable forest management. The policy framework should be kept under review in order to continue to embody capabilities for intersectoral planning, coordination and implementation, and adequate resource allocation;

(f) Establishment, by each country, of a focal point to guide and coordinate the implementation and assessment process of the IPF's proposals for action, including the participation of all relevant interested parties;

(g) Further assistance by the international community to developing countries and countries with economies in transition in implementing the IPF's proposals for action as needed. National forest programmes could be used as a framework for channelling development assistance for implementation. Such support is particularly needed for capacity-building, and for creating participatory mechanisms and innovative financing arrangements.

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Item 4 (e) of the provisional agenda*
Matters left pending and other issues arising from the programme elements of the Intergovernmental Panel on Forests: forest-related work of international and regional organizations and under existing instruments (programme element II.e)

Forest-related work of international and regional organizations and under existing instruments

Note by the Secretariat

Programme element II.e was not discussed by the Intergovernmental Forum on Forests at its third session and is not covered in the report of the Forum on that session (E/CN.17/IFF/1999/25). Accordingly, section II.F of the report of the Forum on its second session (E/CN.17/IFF/1998/14) is reproduced in the annex in order to facilitate discussion of this programme element at the fourth session of the Forum.

* E/CN.17/IFF/2000/1

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Annex

Extract from section II of the report of the Intergovernmental Forum on Forests on its second session*

F. Forest-related work of international and regional organizations and under existing instruments (programme element II.e (i) and II.e (ii))

Preliminary conclusions

1. The Forum emphasized that Governments, international organizations and all interested parties should take a holistic approach to forest matters, which recognizes the importance of social, economic and environmental values and functions of forests, and use their comparative advantages to cooperate in support of management, conservation and sustainable development of all types of forests.

2. The Forum noted that many of the IPF proposals for action are directed towards international organizations and instruments, and that there is significant unrealized potential for further strengthening and mobilizing the capacity of existing international and regional organizations and instruments to support and promote the goal of management, conservation and sustainable development of all types of forests. This can be achieved through the enhancement of their complementarities, the provision of financial resources, better coordination and facilitation of the policy dialogue, and greater coherence of action, including consistent policy guidance at the level of their governing bodies. This approach would help to focus collective action on overall priorities. There is a need to encourage the forging of partnerships with other international and regional organizations and instruments to implement the IPF proposals for action directed towards them.

3. The Forum recognized the informal, high-level Inter-Agency Task Force on Forests as a successful informal partnership in initiating and strengthening forest-related collaboration among organizations within and outside the United Nations in support of the IPF proposals for action. The Task Force requires strong support from each of its member organizations. The strengthening of the work of the Task Force will facilitate the implementation of the IPF proposals for action. The Task Force should continue to practise coordination on an informal basis with respect to the implementation of IPF proposals for action directed towards its member organizations.

4. The Forum acknowledged that in the context of the implementation of the IPF proposals for action, the real challenges ahead lie in further strengthening the existing partnerships among Task Force members and other international and regional organizations and instruments in respect of facilitating the establishment of new modalities of cooperation between Task Force members and other partners for making the best use of all the available forest-related institutional capabilities that exist at the regional and international levels. In this regard, through national forest programmes, special attention should be paid to supporting efforts of countries, in particular developing countries and countries with economies in transition, towards sustainable forest management.

5. The Forum underlined that the IPF proposals for action as a whole constitute an important integrated and multisectoral approach for the achievement of the sustainable forest management of all types of forests. Complementary objectives and approaches on forest-related issues for promoting work among institutions, organizations and instruments are

* E/CN.17/IFF/1998/14.

crucial to improving efficiency and coordination, which should be built upon the IPF proposals for action. Future efforts by international organizations, multilateral institutions and instruments should be flexible in order to accommodate the existing and emerging needs as well as different levels of social and economic development of countries, in particular developing countries. The Forum also encouraged them to provide for the effective participation of and collaboration with all interested parties.

6. The Forum recognized the utility of designing a comprehensive Directory of forest-related international and regional organizations including information regarding relevant global and regional conventions. The Directory could include, *inter alia*, the available institutional information concerning missions, mandates, organizational structures, programmes, activities, personnel and budget, as well as information on collaborative forest-related work and activities of organizations and institutions. The Directory should be updated on a regular basis. FAO, in cooperation with other member organizations of the Task Force, could have a leading role. Additional information about bilateral and multilateral forest-related activities, private sector and research institutions and selected publications could also be included, as provided by the parties involved in such activities. It is suggested that such a Directory be made accessible to all Governments and other interested parties in electronic form, for example, on the Internet.

7. The Forum emphasized that success of the efforts being undertaken by various United Nations bodies on forest-related issues depends on addressing the economic, social and environmental components of sustainable forest management in the context of sustainable development, in a balanced manner. It was also noted that the specific conditions of developing countries and countries with economies in transition in terms of financial, technical and technological capabilities require particular attention. Inter-agency coordination should pay special attention to integrating the needs of developing countries with low forest cover in relevant policies and programmes.

8. With respect to the Forum programme of work under category II.e, according to which it is to "Consider forest-related work of international and regional organizations. Further examine the forest-related work being carried out by international and regional organizations and under existing instruments in order to identify gaps and overlaps", the Forum noted that the Secretariat's documentation provided useful input to deliberations in the Forum regarding issues to be dealt with under category III.

9. The Forum noted that in future it will be necessary to examine practical approaches based on results expected to be achieved and to focus on experiences gained in the implementation of existing instruments and the work programmes of international and regional organizations oriented towards achieving sustainable forest management.

Preliminary proposals

10. The Forum called upon all interested parties, including the governing bodies of relevant international and regional organizations and instruments, to:

(a) Identify practical means for mobilizing their diverse strengths and capabilities to support country-level efforts in implementing the proposals for action adopted by IPF, taking into account the need to enhance the active participation of all parties concerned;

(b) Foster synergies among different international and regional organizations and instruments, and encourage their active participation in and contribution to international forest policy dialogue, with due consideration to the Forest Principles, chapter 11 of Agenda 21 and the IPF/Forum proposals for action;

(c) Clarify the respective roles and work to be carried out by international and regional organizations and instruments with respect to the forest-related programmes of action of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development and its follow-up.

11. The Forum called upon Governments to:

(a) Utilize, as appropriate, the expertise provided by international and regional organizations and instruments in the formulation of their national forest programmes, in particular to better integrate cross-sectoral linkages and the social, economic and environmental aspects of sustainable forest management into national policies;

(b) Establish and strengthen, as appropriate, effective national arrangements to provide coordinated and effective guidance to multilateral organizations.

12. The Forum called upon the secretariats of the Task Force member organizations to:

(a) Inform their governing bodies about the progress and outcome of the IPF/Forum process so as to strengthen their forest-related activities and their inter-agency cooperation in this regard;

(b) Explore and develop the potential for institutional synergies with other partners, especially with regional development banks, regional commissions and other regional intergovernmental bodies, non-governmental organizations, other international organizations and private sector institutions;

(c) Cooperate towards developing a comprehensive Directory of forest-related international and regional organizations and instruments engaged in forest-related activities, including their mandates, missions, organizational structures, programmes, activities, personnel and budget, as well as information on collaborative forest-related work and activities of organizations and instruments. The Directory should be updated on a regular basis. FAO, in cooperation with other member organizations of the Task Force, could have a leading role in this task.

13. The Forum called upon Governments to provide guidance to the governing bodies of international and regional organizations and instruments, and to encourage non-governmental organizations to cooperate in:

(a) Implementing activities to increase public awareness of the direct and indirect benefits derived from forests, at national, subregional, regional and global levels;

(b) Facilitating inter-institutional consultation on cross-sectoral forest policies, policy reforms, and planning and programmes for sustainable forest management;

(c) Enhancing cost-effective data systems, to allow the preparation and the timely dissemination of information on progress in sustainable forest management.

14. The Forum called upon relevant international and regional organizations and instruments to consider, in their relevant policies and programmes, the needs and requirements of developing countries and countries with economies in transition, with special attention to low forest cover countries.

15. The Forum urged international and regional organizations and governing bodies of instruments to support forest programmes and to integrate forest-related aspects in programmes aimed at poverty alleviation, decreasing population pressures, promoting food security and promoting environmental awareness.

16. Consistent with the programme of work under element II.e, which is to "further examine the forest-related work being carried out by international and regional organizations

and under existing instruments in order to identify gaps and overlaps", the Forum requested the Forum secretariat to provide to the Forum at its third session an in-depth analysis of the experiences with implementation, compliance and achievements of forest-related work under existing instruments and by international organizations, as well as an in-depth analysis of the contributions that could be made by regional and international voluntary initiatives, for example, on criteria and indicators, to achieving sustainable forest management, as a way to contribute to building further consensus in future sessions. In this regard, the Forum secretariat was advised to seek assistance from secretariats of existing instruments and other appropriate sources. The analysis should include information on actions to support sustainable forest management as well as the extent of international cooperation, including levels of financial support. The analysis should also include:

(a) Coherence of forest-related objectives and policies among existing instruments and effectiveness in their implementation;

(b) The degree of effectiveness of international cooperation to support forest-related work;

(c) The nature and magnitude of demands by the existing instruments on national institutions as well as existing national capacities to respond to these demands;

(d) Action-oriented proposals to meet the specific needs and requirements of developing countries, in particular those with low forest cover;

(e) Establishment of ways and mechanisms to ensure inclusiveness.